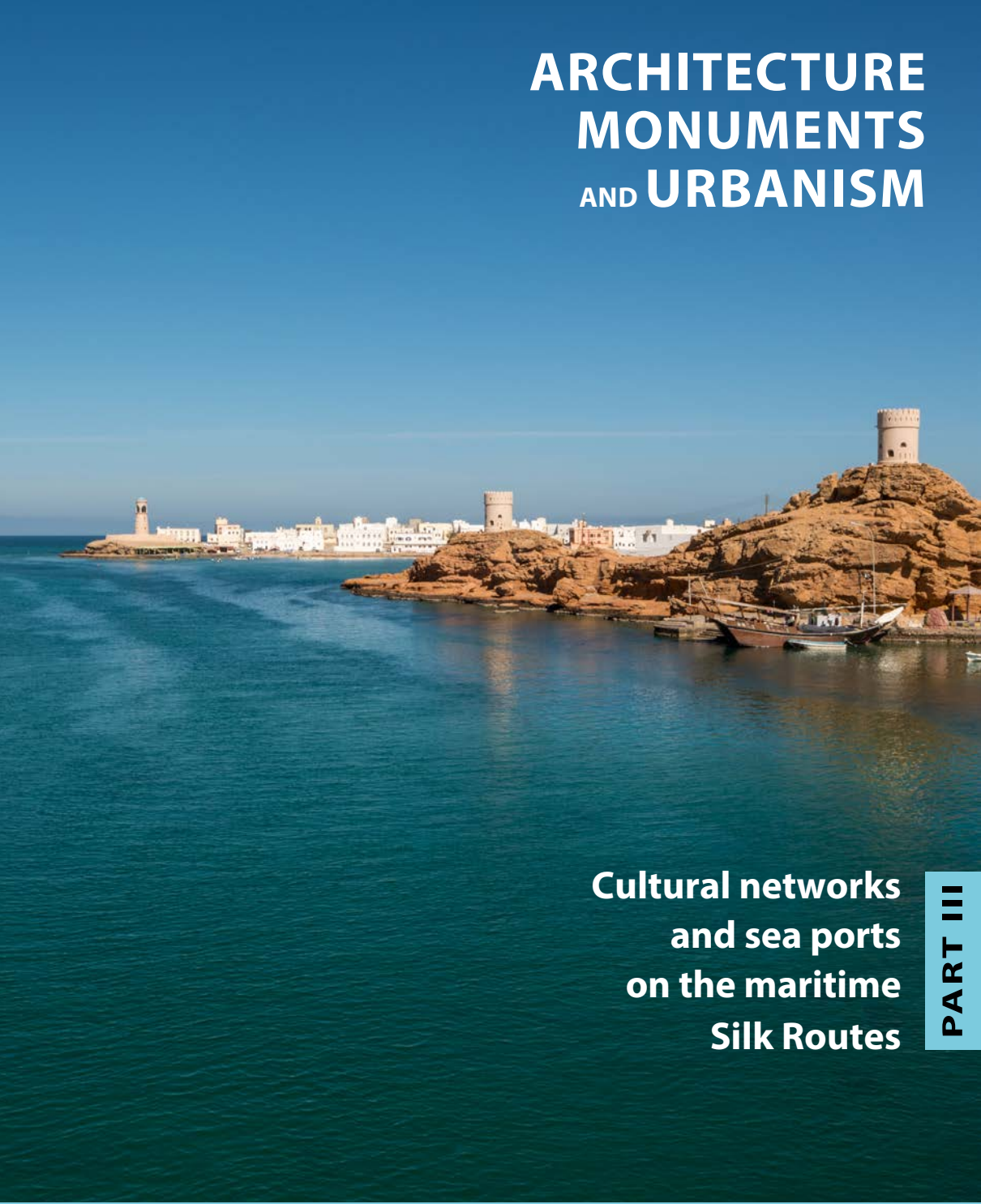
ARCHITECTURE MONUMENTS AND URBANISM



Cultural networks and sea ports on the maritime Silk Routes

PART III

Thematic Collection of the Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Roads

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world historical & cultural cities expo
南京历史文化名城博览会

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Cultural networks and sea ports on the maritime Silk Routes

PART III

Edited by Elena Paskaleva and Michael Turner

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Silk Roads Programme

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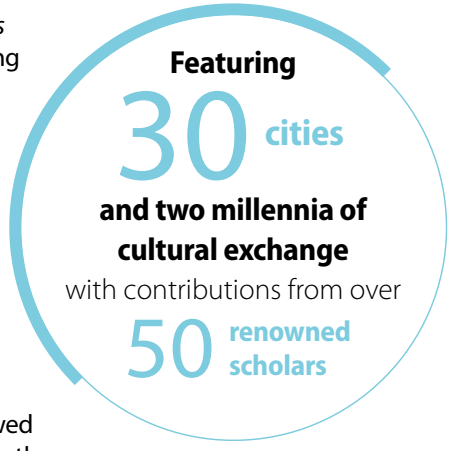
S H O R T S U M M A R Y

The architectural splendours of the Silk Roads, their cities and ports

The most astonishing innovations and fusions of the world's religions, beliefs, and material cultures have occurred along the trade and communication networks between Asia, Africa, and Europe, known today as the Silk Roads. The empires and dynasties, fluctuating like ebbs and flows, triggered waves of cultural interchange across time and space, connected by caravans of knowledge and technological transfers crossing vast distances over barren steppes, impenetrable deserts, and unsurmountable ranges.

This three-part volume on *Architecture, Monuments and Urbanism* explores cities and ports from Nanjing to Seville and Karakorum to Mumbai as individual pearls in a long string of historical vicissitudes and cultural exchanges across the overland Silk Roads and maritime Silk Routes. Regional and international urban planning, archaeology, and architecture experts with decades of experience and intimate knowledge reflect the breadth of views narrated in this trilogy.



The role of caravans and waterways is evaluated within the context of peaceful cohabitation of different ethnicities and religious affiliations, followed by disruptive invasions and natural disasters. Again, the fluidity of the Silk Roads concept is well suited to navigating between tides of exquisite artistry and waves of destruction.

The Silk Roads' relevance today could not be more significant. We hope these volumes appeal to architectural professionals and the wider audience engaged in the wealth of intercultural artistic exchanges. Enjoy the journey!

unesco

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

Foreword

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Gabriela Ramos
Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO

In a complex world confronted with major societal transitions (climate, digital, demographics, inequalities), UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector leverages the Silk Roads shared legacy, the intercultural dialogue, and youth-led research to build inclusive and sustainable societies and ultimately reinforce the culture of peace.

The "Thematic Collection of the Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Roads" is part of this effort, underlining the interconnection of different people and societies, and the shared legacies that have been developed through centuries of dialogue and exchanges. The current volume, a result of expert collaboration, delves into the complex history of cultural exchanges within architecture, monuments, and urbanism along the Silk Roads.

Architecture and monuments silently narrate the stories of societies and their legacies, showing how humans have organized, interacted, and evolved over centuries. Urban designs and constructions are shaped by and reflect the spirit and structure of the societies that they host. Knowledge of their development and evolution throughout history enables us to understand better the past, and plan for the future.

Moreover, studying these structures through scientific lenses provides insights into historical and socio-economic mechanisms and highlights ongoing cultural exchanges that shape our modern cultures and societies. It also helps us understand better how social cohesion and peaceful coexistence can be reinforced.

This volume explores the architectural influences along the Silk Roads through three primary lenses. Its first part delves into cities' urban and cultural landscapes along the Silk Roads, examining their topographies, spatial organization, and iconic structures. It also analyzes specific building typologies, such as caravanserais, bazaars, and religious edifices, highlighting their evolution and the cultural and technological exchanges they facilitated. Moreover, it focuses on the knowledge exchange of technologies and materials, exploring the movement of craftsmen, design practices, and the use of geometry and ornamentation in architectural decoration.

In its second and third parts, this volume explores and showcases the shared legacy of architectural exchanges in major overland and maritime Silk Road cities, such as Nanjing, Chang'an, and Samarqand, and coastal cities such as Quanzhou, Colombo, Istanbul, and Venice.

I extend my thanks to all contributors for their invaluable work on this project. Their expertise has made this publication a cornerstone for further exploration of these themes. I also thank my colleagues at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, particularly Lazare Eloundo Assomo and Roland Lin Chih-Hung, for their invaluable support in developing this volume. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Nanjing Creative Center and the Nanjing Historical & Cultural Cities Expo for their support and partnership in bringing this work to fruition. Final thanks to my team, led by Mehrdad Shabahang, along with Xiaoyang Duan, Tara Golkar, Mark Smith, Yiran Wang, and Xinyu Zhou for their efforts and support.

Gabriela Ramos
Assistant Director-General for
Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO

PART III

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Preface

By David Abulafia

The Silk Road of the Sea

Although the term 'Silk Road' appears to have been coined by the nineteenth-century explorer Baron von Richthofen, reports of elongated trade routes that crossed Eurasia, almost from end to end, have a much longer pedigree. In the ninth century CE, the Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh described the routes leading all the way to China, used by Jewish merchants known as the 'Radhanites', some of whom may have been based in France and Spain. In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo's exceptionally popular *Devisement du Monde* [*The Travels of Marco Polo*] educated French and Italian audiences about the seemingly interminable routes that he took on his way to the court of Khubilai Khan in China. There was much to report as he visited remote cities and observed unfamiliar animals and plants. Readers of the travelogues of both Ibn Khordadbeh and Marco Polo's have always tended to focus on the land routes. But Ibn Khordadbeh was also well aware of the maritime routes that connected the heartland of the Islamic world, via the Red Sea and the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf, to the spice islands of South East Asia and, further still, to the South China Sea and the ports of southern China. Marco Polo returned home from China by sea, accompanying a Mongol princess to Persia. This 'Silk Road of the Sea', as a channel of commercial and cultural contact between East and West, has often gone unnoticed.

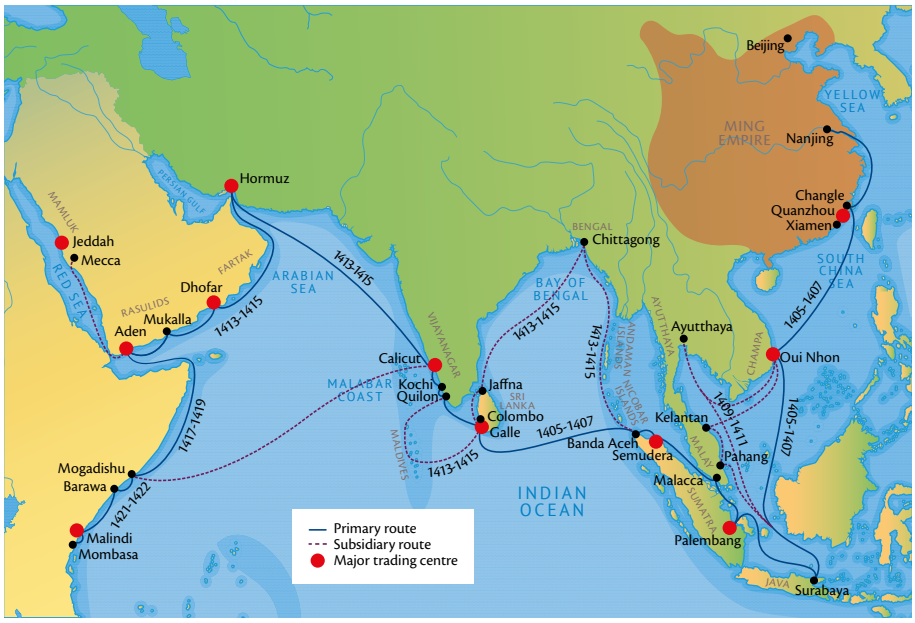
There is no question that the cultural impact of the overland routes is significant, especially when one looks at the spread of Buddhism by both land and sea routes during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries CE. However, it is easy to jump to unverifiable conclusions about the ease of maintaining contact overland. The period of the so-called *Pax Mongolica* ('Mongol Peace'), following Chinggis Khan's conquests in the thirteenth century, was anything but peaceful, as different Mongol khans battled over the succession to his empire. Contrary to common assumption, the Genoese and Venetian merchants who sailed to late medieval Crimea did not come to buy silk and spices but local wheat, wax and slaves. The spices that reached Crimean ports had arrived from Egypt by sea, and were rarely humped overland by camel caravans travelling all the way from China. This casts doubt on the assertion that the Mongol conquests had triggered a first phase of globalization.

The sea route was really a network of connected routes. As indicated in the Introduction to this part, a great variety of ships appeared along this route; but only occasionally do we find evidence that ships setting out from, say, Aden reached China. Goods and people moved across segments of the route. Port cities, a number of which feature in this book, were bustling hubs where cargoes were repeatedly unloaded and reloaded from Chinese junks on to sewn-plank vessels, which were more typical of the Indian Ocean. A series of copper plates from Kollam in south-west India, dating from 849 CE, records the privileges granted by the local king to guilds of merchants who looked in different directions: one group looked towards the east, across the Bay of Bengal, while the other looked westwards, towards the Persian Gulf. From the variety of scripts and signatures engraved on these plates, it can be seen that these groups included Zoroastrians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. Kollam, like most port cities, flourished as a centre where a great variety of ethnic and religious communities co-existed. Jewish merchants were still visiting India in the twelfth century when a Jewish businessman from Mahdia in Tunisia set up a bronze factory in Mangalore and dispatched his goods to Egypt via Aden. Cairo was a major centre of operations for these Jewish merchants, who looked west as far as Sicily and even Spain, and east as far as India, although China, by then, no longer lay on their trade route.

This was not a new phenomenon. Reaching back into the late third millennium BCE there is evidence of trade routes linking the cities of ancient Sumer, in modern-day Iraq, to those of the Indus Valley civilization, by way of Bahrain (then known as Dilmun), which contained a colony of Indian merchants. Among luxury products transported by sea up the Persian Gulf was carnelian, a red stone obtained in India and much prized by the Sumerians. The mysterious collapse of the Indus civilization brought this route to an end. At this stage, the maritime trade routes running down the Red Sea, linking Pharaonic Egypt to modern-day Somalia and Yemen, did not extend, as far as is known, around the bottom of the Arabian Peninsula. A fast route from Yemen to India was discovered around 20 CE when a Greek captain named Hippalos deduced from the monsoon cycle that at a certain time of the year he could safely cut across the open ocean to reach the ports of India, rather than hugging the coastline past Oman and Persia.

From this time onwards, the maritime Silk Routes had a continuous history. Despite some ups and downs, there were no serious breakdowns, unlike those we see on the overland routes. The volume of trade between the Roman Empire and India grew to phenomenal proportions. The Roman naturalist, Pliny the Elder, complained at the drainage of currency eastwards in payment for eastern luxury goods. Indeed, there was a strong tradition of aristocratic disapproval for luxurious living in early imperial Rome, but the reality was that Ostia, the port of Rome, was home to enormous store-houses full of pepper and other spices obtained from India and, in some cases, from further east. Pepper was consumed right across society. Alexandria in Egypt became the hub of routes linking the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.

Figure 1 Itinerary of Admiral Zheng He's fleet**



Map © UNESCO.

Even if Roman attempts to build diplomatic and commercial ties to China petered out, Roman coins have turned up on sites as far east as Thailand and Vietnam. However, this does not mean that merchants from the Roman Empire regularly reached Thailand, as goods were passed from hand to hand along these routes. Meanwhile, the rulers who controlled key points along the routes enriched themselves from taxes on spices, silk and *objets d'art*. By the fourth century, ports along the coast of the South China Sea, notably the town of Oc-èo in the kingdom of Funan (present-day Vietnam), had become points of exchange where one could buy polished gems from Persia, Chinese bronze figurines, and the products of the jewellery workshops of Oc-èo itself in a rainbow of colours from sapphire to ruby. In the eighth century, Arab merchants played a major role in the economy of coastal Vietnam. The opportunity to control movement through the Strait of Malacca was seized by the rulers of Sumatra, whose maritime kingdom of Sri Vijaya (in reality as much a commercial network as a territorial empire) flourished from the eighth century onwards thanks to the ruthless taxation of Indian Ocean merchants bound for China, including Jews from as far west as Aden.

China itself has often looked away from the sea. Some emperors took the view that external trade was damaging to the thriving internal economy of a vast land that could produce most of what its inhabitants required. Large-scale importation of commodities, such as Indonesian camphor, generated a massive outflow of copper coins; the introduction of paper money during the Middle Ages was partly an attempt to avert a bullion famine within China, which lacked major silver mines and was losing so much copper.

Nevertheless, there were periods when its rulers looked out to sea, notably in the twelfth century under the Song Dynasty, and in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries under the Yuan Dynasty of Mongol origin. The most famous Ming voyages, the seven expeditions commanded by Admiral Zheng He at the start of the fifteenth century, were concerned with demonstrating to the known world the pre-eminence of the Middle Kingdom and the Ming emperors, rather than with trade (Figure 1). Indeed, Chinese emperors always avoided overt trade in favour of formal exchanges of tribute in return for handsome imperial gifts. Nevertheless, new ports such as Quanzhou flourished in the Song and Yuan periods.

The cultural impact of these long-distance connections can be measured in the spread of religious ideas, principally from west to east. In the early Middle Ages, Buddhist texts were brought to China and Japan, often by monks from those lands seeking out the text of sutras as far away as India. Meanwhile artistic influences from India greatly influenced how the Buddha and subsidiary *boddhisatvas* were portrayed. Indian artistic styles, which themselves drew on ancient Greek models, were adopted as Buddhism spread in China and Japan, and also in South-East Asia, where – by the twelfth century – the rulers of Angkor in Cambodia began to favour Buddhism over Hinduism. Islam too spread eastward along the sea routes. Its impact was felt in Quanzhou, where a large medieval mosque (described in Chapter 2 of Part III) still survives. But a wider process of Islamization occurred at the end of the Middle Ages in what is now Malaysia and Indonesia, led by such figures as the sultans of Melaka (Malacca) who now guarded the route linking the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea.

This route played a crucial role in the movement of goods, people and ideas between the Indian Ocean and East Asia. As the power of the rajahs of Sri Vijaya waned, new ports emerged that took charge of traffic through the Strait of Malacca. In the fourteenth century, Singapore was enriched by trade in both directions. Its links to China are well represented by the fragments of Chinese celadon pottery that have been found on Canning Hill, where the palace of the rulers of late medieval Singapore once stood. At the start of the fifteenth century, political turmoil saw its ruler escape to a new site, Melaka, which became a vibrant centre of trade owing to its close links to China.

The term 'Silk Roads' suggests that these trade routes were dominated by a single commodity. Silk was obviously transported and traded along these routes, but so were many other Chinese products, notably, ceramics. Just as the Chinese had long preserved the secrets of silk production (which eventually leaked out to Persia and Byzantium), they were masters of porcelain production and had access to top-quality clay that could not be matched by anyone further west. The evidence from medieval shipwrecks found in the South China Sea demonstrates the enormous scale of demand for Chinese ceramics; some ships were carrying half a million pieces of pottery (any silk on board rotted away long ago). This was not the sort of cargo that camel caravans could possibly convey across the deserts, mountains and steppe-lands of Eurasia.

Moreover, western demand, originally from the Islamic world and eventually from Western Europe, greatly stimulated production by Chinese potters for outside markets. Green celadon wares were increasingly overtaken by blue-and-white pottery from the factories of Jingdezhen, manufactured using cobalt, which was often traded in the opposite direction, since there were good sources in Persia and Afghanistan.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this long-lasting passion for Chinese pottery had very significant cultural consequences. At this time, tea drinking began to spread to Western Europe, using Chinese tea leaves and served in what is still called 'china' in English. Porcelain cups and saucers whose motifs were often imitated in the art forms of the West. In the late eighteenth century, the citizens of the newly-established United States were able to send orders to Jingdezhen for Chinese ceramics emblazoned with the American eagle. Earlier still, new routes, created via Spanish-ruled Manila (the subject of Chapter 3 in Part III), ensured that Chinese silks and ceramics travelled by sea across the Pacific to Acapulco, from where they were transferred either to the cities of Mexico or via Veracruz and Havana to Spain and Europe. Large quantities of silver in Spanish Peru travelled in the other direction, helping to fuel the Chinese economy, which, as has been seen, was perennially short of silver. A new Silk Route had come into being, managed by the Manila galleons that sailed every year from 1565 to 1815. The creation of the route from Manila eastwards meant that inter-connected trade routes now completely encircled the Earth for the first time in its history, an important step towards the creation of a genuinely global economy.

*The Silk Roads***

The overland silk roads and maritime silk routes changed overtime dependent on the governance and political powers of the empires and the seasons of the year. The northern summer roads and the southern winter roads were defined by the complex geography of Central Eurasia, its eastern and western edges. The East-West maritime patterns were determined by the monsoon winds through the Indian Ocean. This is a composite map that identifies the major cities and ports threaded on these paths and the natural features that inherently determined their patterns.

Silk Roads

Maritime Silk Routes (Spice Routes)

Eurasian Steppe Routes

Incense Roads

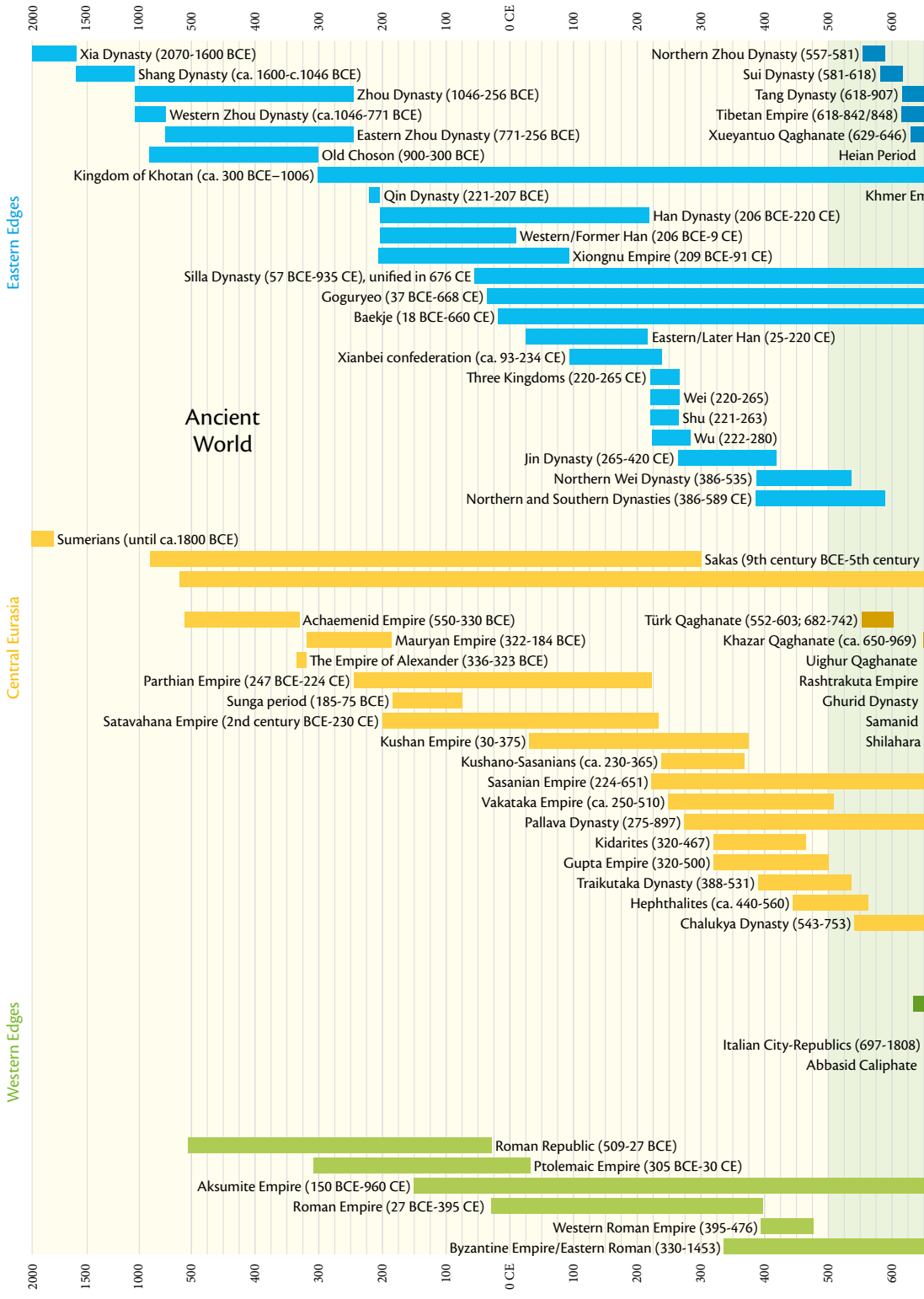
Other Trade and Connecting Routes

Secondary Trading Routes

Overview of dynasties, sultanates, caliphates and empires

This timeline offers an overview of dynasties, sultanates, caliphates and empires within the historical context of the Silk Roads as discussed in this volume. Given the chronological complexity, these epochs are divided into four main temporal waves: the Ancient World, the Pre-modern Period, the Mongol World and the Early Modern Period ending with the First World War. This nomenclature of eras and epochs was needed in order to provide a cross-cultural denominator and allow for overlapping periods as the tides of change overtook new territories. Though intermittent rulership or power discontinuity are not reflected in the overall duration, the overview is meant to reflect the interrelationships of these rulers in time and place. The timeline represents their coexistence across the three main geographical realms of the Silk Roads: the Eastern Edges, Central Eurasia and the Western Edges. Similarly, while the geographic regions have been calibrated on Central Eurasia, and as the ruling powers advanced beyond these boundaries, we have simplified the timeline by grouping the evolving empires, dynasties and caliphates providing an inner consistency.

Overview of dynasties, sultanates, caliphates and empires



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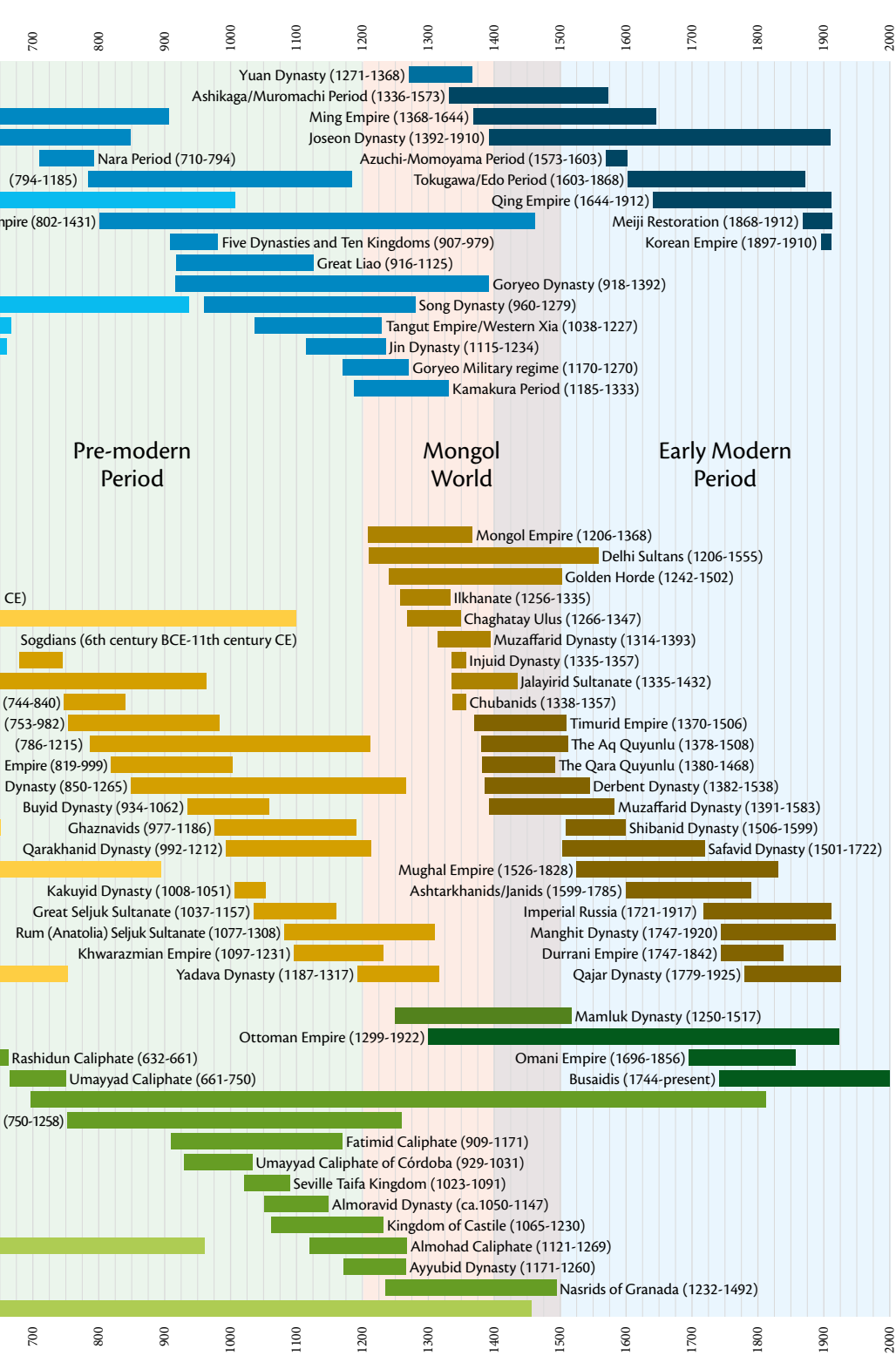
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2000
Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368)
Ashikaga/Muromachi Period (1336-1573)
Ming Empire (1368-1644)
Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910)
Nara Period (710-794)
Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573-1603)
(794-1185)
Tokugawa/Edo Period (1603-1868)
Qing Empire (1644-1912)
npire (802-1431)
Meiji Restoration (1868-1912)
Korean Empire (1897-1910)
Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-979)
Great Liao (916-1125)
Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392)
Song Dynasty (960-1279)
Tangut Empire/Western Xia (1038-1227)
Jin Dynasty (1115-1234)
Goryeo Military regime (1170-1270)
Kamakura Period (1185-1333)
Eastern Edges
Pre-modern Period
Mongol World
Early Modern Period
Mongol Empire (1206-1368)
Delhi Sultans (1206-1555)
Golden Horde (1242-1502)
CE)
Ilkhanate (1256-1335)
Chaghatay Ulus (1266-1347)
Sogdians (6th century BCE-11th century CE)
Muzaffarid Dynasty (1314-1393)
Injuid Dynasty (1335-1357)
Jalayirid Sultanate (1335-1432)
(744-840)
Chubanids (1338-1357)
(753-982)
Timurid Empire (1370-1506)
(786-1215)
The Aq Quyunlu (1378-1508)
Empire (819-999)
The Qara Quyunlu (1380-1468)
Dynasty (850-1265)
Derbent Dynasty (1382-1538)
Buyid Dynasty (934-1062)
Muzaffarid Dynasty (1391-1583)
Ghaznavids (977-1186)
Shibanid Dynasty (1506-1599)
Qarakhanid Dynasty (992-1212)
Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722)
Mughal Empire (1526-1828)
Kakuyid Dynasty (1008-1051)
Ashtarkhanids/Janids (1599-1785)
Great Seljuk Sultanate (1037-1157)
Imperial Russia (1721-1917)
Rum (Anatolia) Seljuk Sultanate (1077-1308)
Manghit Dynasty (1747-1920)
Khwarazmian Empire (1097-1231)
Durrani Empire (1747-1842)
Yadava Dynasty (1187-1317)
Qajar Dynasty (1779-1925)
Central Eurasia
Mamluk Dynasty (1250-1517)
Ottoman Empire (1299-1922)
Rashidun Caliphate (632-661)
Omani Empire (1696-1856)
Umayyad Caliphate (661-750)
Busaidis (1744-present)
(750-1258)
Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171)
Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba (929-1031)
Seville Taifa Kingdom (1023-1091)
Almoravid Dynasty (ca.1050-1147)
Kingdom of Castile (1065-1230)
Almohad Caliphate (1121-1269)
Ayyubid Dynasty (1171-1260)
Nasrids of Granada (1232-1492)
Western Edges
700
800
900
1000
1100
1200
1300
1400
1500
1600
1700
1800
1900
2000

Introduction

Mapping the Maritime Silk Routes

Trade and Cultural Exchange

By Richard T. Griffiths and Sarah Ward

A simple term for a complex phenomenon, the ancient "Maritime Silk Route(s)" describes a network of loosely interconnected long-distance seaborne navigation routes that linked Asia to Arabia, Europe, East Africa, and beyond. In narrative style, this introduction provides key information about the Maritime Silk Routes since the first stirrings about 2,000 years ago. In so doing, it reviews the archaeological remains of ancient ships that ploughed the waves, moving people, goods, information, ideas, customs, traditions, technologies, and architectural materials from port to port. It also examines architectural, iconographic and textual evidence of those ports, their harbours, the urbanised port towns and cities that sprang up around them, and the interconnected maritime networks which facilitated their growth. Finally, it describes the cultural monuments and architectural masterpieces erected by the diverse Maritime Silk Route communities to honour, amongst others, the deities that protected those who braved the waves. These monumental masterpieces bore witness to the centuries-long intercultural communication that fostered maritime cultural exchange, mutual learning among nations, and a shared understanding and respect of among Maritime Silk Route peoples and cultures, which gave rise to some of the world's greatest civilisations and their enduring legacies that have shaped our world today.

Introduction

A simple term for a complex phenomenon, the term 'Maritime Silk Route(s) or 'Maritime Silk Road(s)' describes a network of loosely interconnected long-distance seafaring navigation routes linking China to Northeast East and Southeast Asia, India, West Asia, Europe, East Africa and beyond; the seaborne equivalent of the network of overland caravan routes bearing that famous name – the Silk Road(s) (*die* Seidenstraße/*Seidenstraßen*). The term is often attributed to geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen who in the year 1877 in the Common Era (CE) used it to describe the early period of trade between the Roman Empire and Han China and, more specifically, the route described by Marinus of Tyre. It was only later (c.1960s) that the term's reach was expanded to include the maritime routes and the transport of other goods, such as porcelain, spices and tea.

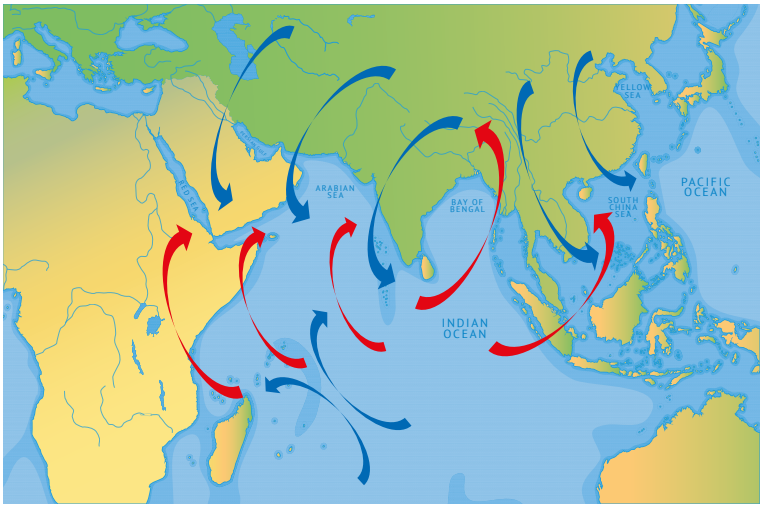
This chapter introduces Part III of the second volume of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *Thematic Collection of the Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Roads: Architecture, Monuments and Urbanism along the Silk Roads, Cultural Networks and Sea Ports on the Maritime Silk Routes*. Part III retraces the historical and geographical imprints of the architectural exchanges along the Maritime Silk Routes. As such, this introductory chapter describes, in narrative style, the rise of the Maritime Silk Routes from the initial stirrings about 2,000 years ago until around 1800 CE when European merchants were fully entrenched in the Indian Ocean. In so doing, it introduces the monumental remains of ancient ships that ploughed the waves, moving people, goods, information, ideas, customs, traditions, technologies and architectural materials from port to port. In addition, it considers evidence from ports, their harbours, the urbanised towns and cities that sprang up around them, as well as the maritime monuments and architectural masterpieces erected to honour, amongst others, the deities that protected those who braved the waves.

Early development of the Maritime Silk Routes

Long-distance voyages along the Maritime Silk Routes were made possible by the great monsoon winds (after the Arabic for 'season', *mawsim*) (Figure 1) that powered navigation in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The monsoons propelled vessels eastward in one season and westward in another. The southwest monsoon facilitated the eastward movement in the northern hemisphere summer from around June to September, while the northeast monsoon facilitated movement in the opposite direction in the winter months from around October to April.

The earliest archaeological evidence of this long-distance maritime trade is afforded by the ruined port city of Ur (present-day Tell el-Muqayyar), which in the year 2500 Before the Common Era (BCE), had been the capital of Mesopotamia. The city once lay slightly upriver where the Euphrates River flowed into the Persian Gulf. Today, it lies some 18 kilometres inland.

Figure 1 Visualising the monsoon winds**



Map © Richard T. Griffiths.

The (restored) Temple of the Moon God dominates the site. Tombs near the site have revealed precious metals and stones from many parts of the world. More recently, satellite imagery has allowed archaeologists to map the city walls, the streets and houses, and the location of two harbours. Later surveys with ground-penetrating radar confirmed that the main harbour was 15 metres wide and eight metres deep with walls made from baked bricks. Possible partner ports could have been Sopara (ancient Surparaka or Shurparaka) or Dwarka on India's west coast.

Sopara, now Nallasopara (Nala Sopora), in modern northern Mumbai, was an important ancient port that connected India with Oman and the Mediterranean from about the third century BCE until its abandonment around 1500 CE (dates vary). Some scholars have identified Sopara as *Ariake* (*Ar – abike*) inscribed by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BCE), ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, centred on present-day Egypt, from 284–246 BCE on the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*. The *Periplus* is a first-century CE Greco-Roman travelogue that describes navigation and trading opportunities through the Erythraean Sea, today's Indian Ocean. As Chapter 6 suggests, Sopara was one of a cluster of ancient ports that are now part of modern Mumbai.

To its north, Dwarka, in the State of Gujarat, occupies an important place in the cultural and religious history of ancient India. Identified as the island of *Barake* (*Baraca*) in Ptolemy II's *Periplus*, Lord Krishna, the Hindu Supreme God, is said to have founded this town by reclaiming 12 *yojana* of land from the sea. A port city of beautiful gardens, deep moats, spectacular temples, ponds and palaces, Dwarka is believed to have submerged again after Krishna's death in 3102 BCE. It is here that maritime archaeologists from India's National Institute of Oceanography discovered the architectural remains of several stone jetties and mooring points tentatively dated to 3,000 BCE–1,500 CE. Dwarka's importance as a port is furher demonstrated by the discovery of 120 contemporary stone anchors of different varieties and origins.

Evidence of the presence of Romans on the site, including an amphora shard, suggests that Dwarka was also a destination for trade with ancient Rome, perhaps even a stopping-off point *en route* to Ceylon, present-day Sri Lanka, or Java, Indonesia, as suggested in Chapter 4.

In 275 BCE, Ptolemy II established a port on the western shore of the Red Sea and named it after his mother, Queen Berenice I. Berenice Troglodytica, Berenikė, Baranis, or hereafter, Berenice, served as a centre for trade between the Ptolemaic Kingdom, East Africa (for elephants) Arabia (for medicinal plants), and Asia (for spices). India served as the transhipment hub connecting the eastern and western worlds. After Cleopatra was defeated, and the Romans conquered Egypt in 30 BCE, they immediately constructed a large fleet of merchant ships to capitalise on the globalising trade. Berenice eventually evolved into a bustling metropolis of enormous importance. During the third century BCE the port town grew to include a military installation to support the southern maritime expeditions, but by the seventh century CE Berenice had been abandoned. The impacts of climate change were finally felt as the desert sands swallowed the site.

Berenice now lies two kilometres inland from the modern Egyptian fishing village at Aynuna Bay. Here archaeologists discovered Indian-made pottery, textiles, beads and gems from as far away as Indonesia. Other finds include a Roman Venus figurine, the carving of a Nubian diety, a mother-of-pearl Christian cross and West Asian Gandhara-style sculptures, originating from an area that now forms Pakistan and Afghanistan. Several Indic jars containing almost eight kilograms of black peppercorns dated to the first century CE, and which were only grown in southwestern India, where also identified. Near the harbour, the remains of a timber frame of early Roman vessel made of Lebanese cedar was found, along with an Indian-made ships' sailcloth. The cedar was likely a repair since archaeologists discovered other ships' timbers made of teak from southern India and acacia (wattle) native to Australia. Eleven languages and alphabets were discovered among the texts and ostraca (potshards used as a writing surface), attesting to a culturally diverse merchant community. One estimate suggests that as many as 120 ships carrying 75 tonnes each may have sailed each year from Berenice to the west coast of India.

Indic sailcloth was found at the port of Myos Hormos, modern-day Quseir al-Quadim (old Quseir), almost 300 kilometres to the north of Berenice. The oldest port on the Red Sea, Myos Hormos was established by Ptolemy II as the principal harbour for trade with India. It was also used during Roman and Islamic times. The same sailcloth at both sites suggests that Indian-built, repaired or-supplied ships were frequenting these harbours. Whether the vessels were constructed entirely in India or in the Mediterranean using Indian-made sails cannot be determined. However the hybrdidised remains of the two-masted Indo-Eurasian Thaikkal-Kadakkarappally (TKK) ship, found in the coastal village of Kadakkarappally, in the southwestern Indian State of Kerala, demonstrates a unique an unparalleled combination of Mediterranean, Indian and Chinese shipbuilding techniques in a single ship.

Built of local Keralan timbers, the TKK ship leaves open the possibility that vessels built in India were visiting Myos Hormus. Moreover, it raises series questions about the significance of maritime cultural exchange along the Maritime Silk Routes.

To the north of Kadakkarappally, at an inland site near present-day Pattanam, in the West Indian State of Tamil Nadu, residents discovered broken pottery shards, fired bricks and the occasional coin hoard. Scholars believe that this was the ancient Malabar port of Muziris (*Muchiri, Muciripattanam*) hailed by Pliny the Elder as "the first emporium of India" and mentioned by Ptolemy II in the *Periplus*. The urban structures explored revealed the existence of a wharf with bollards. About 2.5 metres below the surface, parallel to the wharf, archaeologists discovered a six-metre-long wooden canoe. Most of the finds in the first excavation phase were dated from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE, suggesting that this was the port's most prosperous period. The pottery consisted of Roman amphora and *terra sigillata* shards and fragments from Sasanian, Yemenite and other West Asian ceramics. Interestingly, among the finds was a proliferation of rouletted ware, probably made in the Bengal-Gangetic region in India's northeast, suggesting a significantly more extended network than previously discovered.

The speculation over how far early Roman ships explored these trade routes was resolved by the 2003 discovery of a shipwreck off Godawaya (Godavaya) on Sri Lanka's south coast. Radiocarbon dating of timber samples recovered from the wreck date the ship to somewhere between the first and second centuries BCE. More astounding still is that the wreck has been identified as that of a Roman vessel carrying a cargo of raw materials, including ingots of iron and others of glass, as well as finished stone benches and ceramic bowls similar to that found at Pattanam. Given the date, the ship would likely have hugged the Indian coast. Yet, it did not end its voyage at any of the Indian or Sri Lankan ports mapped on the *Periplus*. Indeed, the ship sailed past them. Was it searching for the ancient port of Godawaya, where Han (Chinese) and Roman relics have been found together, or did it intend to sail further into the Bay of Bengal bound for Thailand, or on to Indonesia? Its final destination remains unknown.

Located halfway between the Roman Empire and the Han Dynasty, Sri Lanka was strategically significant in the development of the Indian Ocean trade and an important transhipment hub. The southernmost point of mainland Asia, it is where the monsoon winds changed directions. Manthai, situated on the north-western coast, was the principal seaport of Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura Kingdom (377 BCE–1017 CE). Ptolemy mapped it, too. Archaeological excavations of Manthai's triple-moated port produced evidence for several high-value spices, supporting evidence for a spice trade network that ferried Indonesian cloves and Indian peppercorns from Sri Lanka to Middle Eastern and Mediterranean kitchens.

Around the same time that Arab (Moorish) traders established the port of Colombo, processed wheat grains dated to 100–200 CE and grape seeds to 650- 800 CE were found in Manthai further revealing its maritime socio-cultural connections to the ancient Mediterranean world. Charred black pepper dating to 600–700 CE was also recovered from Manthai along with a single clove dated to 900–1100 CE. The clove was an exceedingly rare find, not only because ancient people were cautious with their spices (due to their high cost) but because the clove had been carried about 7,000 kilometres from its native home in the Maluku islands of Indonesia's Banda Arc.

Long-distance maritime trade and cultural exchange depended on being able to harness the monsoon winds. Exactly when this first occurred in the western Indian Ocean World is impossible to say, although Omani seafarers established long-distance maritime trading networks in the second century BCE (Chapter 7). As for Egypt, the winds were thought to have been discovered by Eudoxus of Cyzicus when the Ptolemies were in power (305–30 BCE). The second-century CE Egyptian Muziris papyrus, although heavily debated, suggests that departure and arrival times to Egypt and Muziris in the Malabar region of India were scheduled in line with monsoon south and north winds. The Romans later took advantage of this knowledge and converted it into an essential source of wealth and commerce. Further evidence for this is afforded by inscriptions found on the island of Socotra. The island lies about 385 kilometres south of Arabia and 260 kilometres east of the African coast (see the key map). It could not be reached or seen by sailors unless their ships ventured into the open sea. The island's earliest inscriptions date from before 100 CE. They appear in Indian, Iranian, Ethiopic, South Arabian and Greek languages and increased in number until ceasing in until about 400 CE. In one cave, which seems to have been the centre of a temple, most are in Sanskrit, suggesting a strong presence of Indian mariners and merchants.

From China's perspective, the first recorded long-range expedition was in 111 BCE, when Emperor Wu sent envoys carrying gold and silk to Southeast Asia and India. As with the Roman ships, these voyages were made by hugging the coast. It is unknown when the vessels in the Eastern Indian Ocean started harnessing the monsoon, but Faxian's account of his travels seems to settle the issue. Faxian (Fa-Hien or Fa-Hsien, ca. 337–422 CE) was a Buddhist monk who travelled overland to India in 402 CE to obtain faithful copies of sacred texts, initiating Sino-Indian relations.

Faxian was forced to confront his fear of the open sea on the return journey. He opted to return with 200 other passengers on a merchant ship travelling on a route that cut across the Indian Ocean from Sri Lanka to Sumatra, and by sea again from there to China's Eastern Jin Dynasty. Monks and their fellow passengers were not the only ones who directly interacted with Sri Lanka; Diplomats did too. In 428 CE, Sri Lanka's king suggested a regular exchange of letters with the Eastern Jin, the equivalent to establishing diplomatic relations.

Maturation of the Maritime Silk Routes

The corresponding rise of the Iraqi Islamic Abbasid Dynasty and Tang China in the mid-ninth century CE created a considerable demand for trade across the Indian Ocean. Chapter 9 describes Arab traveller al-Musadi's visit to Zanzibar (then the Kingdom of Zanj), the southwestern terminus of the Maritime Silk Routes. Al-Musadi recounts, "It is from this country that come tusks of ivory weighing fifty pounds and more. They usually go to Oman, and from there are sent to China and India… and if it were not so, ivory would be common in Muslim lands."

However, India was not the only stopover from West to East. Two books written by Ibn Khordadhbib in the same period describe the route of sailors leaving Siraf on the Red Sea coast of present-day Iran and sailing for Tang China. The first port of call was likely Muscat or Sohar in Oman. After that, some ships collected cargo in Daybul (also romanised as Debal or Dewal), present-day Keti Bandar Port, in the Sindh province of Pakistan, while others sailed directly for the Malabar coast of Kerala, India, where Muziris was located. The next and longest leg of the journey was around the southern tip of India, across the Bay of Bengal to the east coast of Malaysia. From there, they would enter the South China Sea and sail upwards, possibly stopping at the port of Óc Eo in Funan, now on the coast of modern Vietnam, until they reached Guangzhou.

The first shipwreck supporting this achievement, is located off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Known as the Tang or Belitung wreck, the ship sank somewhere between 826 CE and 840 CE. The ship was, an Arab or Indian dhow, meaning that it was a lateen-rigged ship with a triangular fore-and-aft sail with one or two masts, common to the western Indian Ocean.

Hsieh Ming-liang's reconstruction of the the ships's navigation route suggests that the ship sailed from Guangzhou in Tang China with some 25 tonnes of ceramics and 10 tonnes of lead ingots on its return journey to West Asia. It had possibly detoured to pick up some spices, resins and aromatics, for which the East Indies and Indonesian islands were famed, before embarking on the long crossing of the Indian Ocean. A considerable quantity of star anise (possibly for medicinal purposes) was found on board along with some 52,000 ceramics, including three blue-and-white pieces, the earliest ever found (Figure 2).

This ship was not the only vessel engaged in such trade. Located off the coast of Chau Tan in central Vietnam, the remains of a large 25-metre-long, nine-metre-wide merchant ship built between 663 and 766 CE (the earliest known wreck in Vietnam) were revealed after a typhoon removed the sand covering it. Sufficient timbers survived to suggest that it was a typical Southeast Asian vessel with a cargo of Chinese-made export ceramics consisting of Yue green celadon, white porcelain, three-colour ware, blue-and-white ceramics, and shards with Islamic green-blue ware. Interestingly, 968 of the recovered shards carried inscriptions (mainly on the underside) written in Chinese, Brahmic and Arabic scripts.

Twenty-three of the shards carried the word Ambārak, the name of an important port city in present-day Iran (destroyed by an earthquake in 977 CE).

Figure 2 From the cargo of the Belitung wreck

2a. A bronze mirror with a cosmological decoration and inscription, eight century. The inscription reads *"Made on the 29th day of the 11th month of the first year of the wuxu era of the Qianyuan reign"*.

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2b. A Tang octagonal gold cup with a thumb plate at the top of its handle, manufactured probably in Yangzhou, Jiangsu.

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2c. Ewer with lugs, a dragon-head spout, and feline-shaped handle, from North China.

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2d. A blue and white stoneware plate with floral moti, manufactured in kilns in Gongxian, Henan.

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The Chau Tan ship was not the only ship to ply the Silk Routes of the seas on shorter voyages. Sometime between 918 and 960 CE, for example, a Southeast Asian ship sank near the present-day Intan oil field in Sumatra, Indonesia. The cargo included bottles from Southern Thailand, large shards from blue-green iridescent glazed jars from West Asia, 94 silver ingots, as well as bronze, lead, silver coins, iron, tin, gold, glass, ceramic, stone, organics, and scrap and sheet copper alloy, originating from China, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Persian Gulf, along with a wide range of Buddhist and Hindu cultural items. These clues indicate entrepot trade, and point to the lading port of Palembang, the Srivijayan capital. The ship was thought to be on its way to Java when it sank in foul weather.

The cargo discovered in these shipwrecks allows us to say something about this maritime trade and the cultural exchange of goods, information, ideas, knowledge, people, customs and traditions. However, there is plenty of supporting evidence in written accounts and traditional histories. The overwhelming quantity of goods recovered from the early wrecks were ceramics of various shapes, colours and sizes. Most of the long-distance trade came from China, but that is because of the (un) happy coincidence that the Belitung and Chau Tan ships were engaged in East-West trade and the fact that this occurred in an era when China dominated the export market. A survey of 15 shipwrecks containing with both Chinese and Southeast Asian ceramics, showed that China had a one hundred per cent share of the ceramic market before 1325 CE, but that the market share had decreased to fifty per cent from 1368 to 1424–1430 CE and further decreased to five per cent from 1424–1430 to 1487 CE. This decrease would explain the appearance of other ceramics from Southeast Asia. The geographical spread of ceramics from what is now known as the Pandanan ship, which sank off the coast of Pandanan Island (Philippines), in the mid-fifteenth century CE, and from the Intan wreck which contained ceramics manufactured in Thailand and Vietnam, as well as goods, including iridescent glass fragments and Persian torpedo jars, made in West Asia.

Apart from the fact that many of the destinations could not be reached by camel train, shipping was preferred because of the weight of the cargo and, in the case of ceramics, their fragility. Camels needed loading and unloading daily, whereas ships did not. Well-packed ceramics could also survive storms and shipwrecks. As for weight, a camel could carry 150 kilograms, but on a long journey, half of the weight would be food for the camels themselves. A train of 150 camels could, therefore, carry 11–12 tonnes of cargo, whereas the ships carried three, four or even five times that amount. The weight of architectural elements, such as the Roman column drums recovered from Turkey's Kizilburun Roman wreck, would have been impossible to transport by camel.

Baltic connections

The European demand for exotic spices is evidenced by a ship that foundered far from the traditional 'Silk Routes'. In the summer of 1495 CE (during China's Ming Dynasty), Royal flagship *Gribshunden* was carrying Danish King Hans to the city of Kalmar in Sweden when it sank en route. Hans was heading to Sweden to meet with ruler, Sten Sture the Elder, to create a Scandinavian Union, of which Hans hoped to become king. Archaeologists working on the site will soon be able to describe the splendour of the royal quarters on board and the treasures it contained. There would have been much feasting. The wreck revealed exotic spices from the East, including black peppercorns from India, premium-grade saffron from Kashmir, cloves from Indonesia, and ginger from the eastern Mediterranean (as well as mustard, dill, and caraway, which could be sourced more locally) used to flavour the foods. What better example of the merging of food cultures and long-distance trade of the time?

Maritime cultural exchange

The trading ports along the coast of the Maritime Silk Routes were locations for exchanging goods and sites where ships could replenish water and food. Local agents (buyers and sellers) with market knowledge acted as intermediaries. Where there was trade, there were settled populations of foreign traders and their families. Gradually, around these nodes grew a secondary migration of people to serve their material and spiritual needs. These people concentrated in specific areas of a city, called concessions or international settlements. Here, foreigners could continue their customs, traditions and religious practices without interference. Whatever the state of war or peace, these populations were afforded a significant degree of freedom of expression and were ruled by their own legal codes. These freedoms were reciprocated because, without such guarantees, there would have been no settlement and, therefore, no trade. While the layout of the ports themselves may have become lost by redesign and rebuilding, and the concessions dissolved, the civic architecture will often still reflect religious diversity and the crossovers in design.

Religion and spirituality

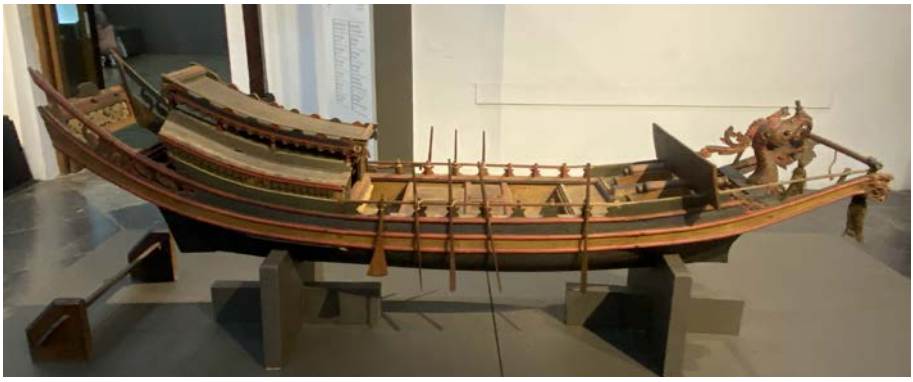
One of the guaranteed freedoms was that of religious belief and practice. Thus, as the various diaspora expanded, so did the presence of spiritual leaders (imams, priests, monks, and others), who also became familiar with seaborne transport. Hence, they ventured further afield for both knowledge and followers. Buddhists searched for sutras and training and travelled to Sri Lanka (Chapter 5) and India. The influence of Hinduism stretched across the Bay of Bengal into Southeast Asia. Islamic traders expanded their presence along the coast of Africa (Chapter 12) and into Java and Sumatra. China's surge of interest in foreign trade in the Southern Song (1127–1279 CE), Yuan (1279–1368 CE) and early Ming (1378–1644 CE) dynasties contributed to the expansion of the Chinese diaspora.

Shipbuilding traditions

Research on ports is often used to explore past social interactions along the Maritime Silk Routes, but what of the shipwrecks? Shipwrecks reveal the ancient architecture of the Maritime Silk Routes as much as the remnant caravanserais that once afforded shelter along the overland Silk Roads. When salvaged from the depths, shipwrecks and their relics are conserved, studied and shown off to the public. Discovered underwater, or in the intertidal zone, the remains of the ships, cargoes and passengers' personal possessions are recovered by archaeologists (or looters, but that is another question) interpreted, displayed and housed in museums. Looters care little for the shipwrecks themselves, and the information they contain, but if left *in situ*, these maritime architectural masterpieces are every bit as monumental as their counterparts onshore. When afloat, ships were the means by which people, information, customs, traditions and often languages were exchanged along the Maritime Silk Routes, an ancient information superhighway.

The tradition with which a vessel was built (sewn-plank, lashed-lug, and other techniques) embodies ideas about what a ship should be and how it should be constructed. As terrestrial monuments tell of the culture from which they were created, including the political, economic, technological, social and spiritual aspects, so do ships. Ship timbers tell of where the ship was built and where it was repaired. The hull shape, be it a flat bottom, rounded U, or deep V-shaped form, for example, can tell us why the ship was built, what it was intended to carry, and where it was planned to operate (shallow rivers, sandy coastal waters or deep open ocean). It also reveals the natural, human, technological, financial and other resources available to build it. A ship can also tell of the relationships between seafaring cultures, evident in hybridised hull forms (Figure 3). So, let us consider what can be learned from some of those shipwrecks.

Figure 3 The Prahu, traditional sailing boat of Indonesia with a dragon head



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Part of a ship's hull, excavated from a beach on Andaman Island in the Bay of Bengal, has helped us understand the planking methods used by early shipwrights around the Malay Peninsula. The planking on the Pak Khlong Kluny (PKK) shipwreck dates to the first century CE and originated from a small ship or boat built in what is now Ranong province in southern Thailand. The timbers were edged-joined together with pegged mortise and tenon joints, comparable to those identified in the ancient Mediterranean. The technique was used by Phoenician shipbuilders and widely adopted on Greco-Roman hull timbers like those found at Berenice. The location and age of the PKK planks provide evidence that – from the first millennium – the wood was sourced from different places; the planks are from a hardwood species, the pegs are teak, while the tenons are velvet tamarind, a species native to East Africa.

By the seventh century CE, the evidence suggests that many different shipbuilding traditions coexisted along the Maritime Silk Routes. Improvements in ship technology and construction methods enhanced the ship's seaworthiness and offered safer transportation. Moreover, they provided the potential to build larger vessels and undertake longer-distance voyages. Over time, two dominant shipbuilding traditions emerged along the Maritime Silk Routes:

- The Western Indian Ocean tradition, in which the flush or edge-joined planks of the clinker hull are hand-sewn together using plant or vegetable fibres. This 'sewn plank technique' was used to construct the 22-metre long, 6.5-metre wide ship that became the above-mentioned Belitung wreck.
- The Southeast Asian tradition, in which the same flush laid planks of the clinker hull are edge-joined with blind timber dowels or pegs, called treenails, trenails, trennels or trunnels, and then lashed together. The planks are then fastened to the ribs with fibres secured by protruding lugs carved on the inside surface of the planks. This Southeast Asian 'lashed lug technique' is indigenous to the region and is evidenced by the Chau Tan shipwreck,in central Vietnam.

In 2013, a seventh-century CE shipwreck was discovered in Samut Sakhon province on Thailand's east coast. Thai archaeologists estimate that the two-masted merchant ship, now known as the Phnom-Surin Ship (PNS), would have been 20 metres long and eight metres wide with more than 60 tonnes of displacement. It appears to have been the remains of an early Arab dhow built in the Western Indian Ocean tradition using a sewn plank technique. However, its structural timbers are of Southeast Asian, not Indo-Persian, origin, as observed in the Tang or Belitung wreck. The use of Southeast Asian timbers suggests that the ship was either built in the Western Indian Ocean using wood imported from Southeast Asia, made by Indo-Persian shipwrights' resident in Southeast Asia, or constructed in Southeast Asia by Southeast Asian shipwrights trained by Indo-Persian experts. Either way, it evidences the technological transfer hybridisation and exchange along the Maritime Silk Routes. Some other features are unique to this ship. The butts of the adjacent planks are covered with coconut fibre wadding. The holes along the edge of adjacent planks are sewn together by ropes stitched over the wadding. The number of artefacts from the site is limited. However, the finds include Persian torpedo jars, further suggesting a Western Indian Ocean connection.

Southeast Asian ships built in the lashed lug tradition are found in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. In the Philippines, six boat remains were found at Mindanao. Known as the Butuan Boats, these boats also employed blind wooden dowels to edge-join the planks. The joints were reinforced by lashing them together and lashing the planks to the ribs; iron nails, a Chinese feature, were never used.

The Punjulharjo shipwreck, dated to 660–780 CE and located in Central Java, provides detailed evidence of the structural features of the Southeast Asian lashed-lug ship. The lower hull remained relatively intact. It measured about 16 metres long and five metres wide. The bow and stern also survive, and show the wing transom's structure. Twelve frames were placed on protruded lugs on the ship timbers. However, the inboard-aligned lugs indicate that there were originally 17 frames. Several longitudinal bars, which appear to be bamboo, were fixed on top of the frames to increase the ship's longitudinal and transverse strength. The Cirebon shipwreck provides further evidence of the Southeast Asian shipbuilding tradition. Although similar in style to the Punjulharjo shipwreck, it dates from the tenth century CE.

When it sank, the Cirebon ship, was carrying around 150 tonnes of iron products and around 250,000 Chinese ceramics. Each compartment for cargo storage inside the hull was designated as a personal space for private merchants. The corroded anchor from the Cirebon shipwreck is interesting because it is of composite construction; a similar anchor was found with the Belitung ship. The design, which included crossed arms, probably originated from somewhere along the Indian Ocean, again suggesting some form of technological transfer, hybridisation and exchange. The tenth-century CE Cirebon shipwreck, the ninth-century CE Chau Tan shipwreck, and the seventh-century CE Punjulharjo shipwreck all indicate the continuous role of Southeast Asian seafarers in pan-Asian shipping. Guangzhou was the prime destination throughout what Europeans refer to as the medieval and post-Medieval periods (Ming and Qing Dynasties).

In the tenth century, the unifying Song Court brought political stability to China. It developed China's inland water transport system, which allowed more goods to be carried to the coast to meet the ever-growing export demands. Trade was centralised, and shipbuilding flourished along the East China Sea coast. Excavated shipwrecks from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provide evidence of a uniquely Chinese shipbuilding tradition. The general form of Chinese vessels is not dissimilar to that of a piece of bamboo split along its length, the nodal walls analogously acting like the transom bow, transom stern and bulkheads of the vessel, dividing its hull into compartments that were also used to separate the consignments of different merchants.

The Fujian-style (Fu, or Fuchuan) ships built in the East China Sea tradition, were large ocean-going vessels with V-shaped hulls, a sharp keel and deep draught. They were fast and easily manoeuvrable in the deep open ocean, even in rough seas. A typical example is the Quanzhou Ship. Dated to the Song Dynasty (Figure 4), the ship was discovered during the dredging of a canal approximately 10 kilometres from the city of Quanzhou, formerly Zayton, on China's eastern coast. The ship was preserved up to the waterline (Chapter 2). Its remains measure about 24 metres long by nine metres wide and consist of the keel, part of the transom, and 13 bulkheads, the exact number reported by the emblematic Venetian explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324 CE) in his *Travels* (Chapter 11).

Around the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century CE, there was a noticeable shift in the shipbuilding techniques used in Southeast Asia caused by increased activity of merchant ships from the East China Sea on the South China Sea trades. Southeast Asian shipwrights stopped lashing the planks, the lugs disappeared, and instead they used treenails to join the flush-laid planks. There was also a profound transformation in shipbuilding practices and maritime technological advances (Figure 5) along the coasts of the South China Sea, and ship technology hybridised due to the integration of existing techniques with exogenous technologies, mainly from China. French archaeologist, Pierre-Yves Manguin initially identified this hybrid hull form, which has since become known as the South China Seas tradition.

Figure 4 Early Song Dynasty warship from the Wujing Zongyao

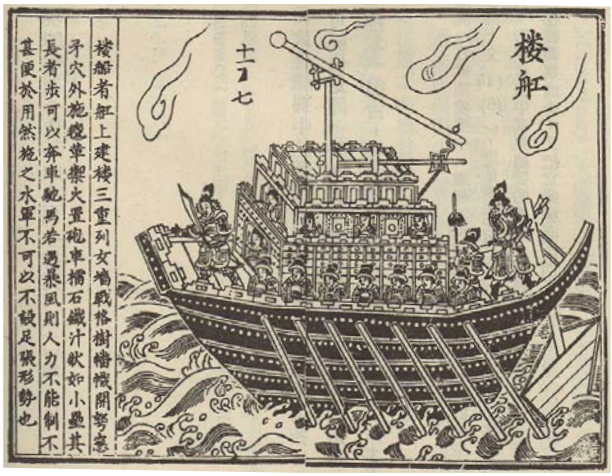

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Figure 5 Song Dynasty figurine of a man holding a compass

© Gary Todd from Xinzheng, China, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

The voyages of Admiral Zheng He

In 1405 CE Eunuch Admiral Zheng He (also romanised as Cheng Ho) set off on the first of seven 'Treasure' voyages to the 'Western Ocean' (see the map in the Preface to Part III). Departing Nanjing (Chapter 1), Zheng He is reported to have commanded the largest fleet, with the largest ships ever to have sailed on a mission of trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange. The 'Treasure Fleets' reportedly visited more than 30 countries and regions in the Indian Ocean World from the South China Sea to the Indian Peninsula, Persian-Arabian states - which further evidence suggests had extended to the Red Sea - and across East Africa.

During these voyages, Zheng He called on Galle in southern Sri Lanka. Here he erected a trilingual inscription that refers to offerings he intended to make on the sacred mountain of Sri Pada (Adam's Peak) during his pilgrimage. The fleet also visited Calicut on the southwest coast of India, but on the last three voyages it divided at Arabia and a smaller fleet proceeded to the African coast. The map of the voyages reflects the intricate, interlaced network of connections that formed the Maritime Silk Routes. The exercise aimed to establish diplomatic relations through a form of tribute trade, that is, the exchange of goods/gifts between rulers. Although it is suggested (Chapter 8) that the fleets travelled to the island of Mombasa, exactly how far they travelled down the coast of Africa is unknown.

In the twelfth century, on the island of Kilwa off the coast of today's Tanzania, the Mahdali era of the powerful Kilwa Sultanate began. Founded in the tenth century by Ali ibn al-Hassan Shirazi (the Persian Prince of Shiraz), the Kilwa Sultanate, at its height, stretched over the entire length of the Swahili Coast from Barawa (also romanised as Barawe or Brava) in modern-day Somalia in the north to Sofala (Mozambique) in the south.

It included what is today, Kenya, Tanzania and the coastal islands of Zanzibar, Comoros and Madagascar. When fourteenth-century Maghrebi Arab traveler Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa in 1331 CE, he described it as "one of the most beautiful towns in the world". Ships would sail from the coast laden with gold, grain, wood and ivory. In return, Kilwa imported cotton, ceramics, Ming Chinese porcelain, and silk. Although Zheng He is reported to have visited Kilwa in the fifteenth century, and the significant finds of shards of Chinese ceramics along the coast confirm trading links with China, the trade was likely via intermediary ports further east.

By 1500 CE, there had evolved a rich and developed maritime trading network whose ports had grown rich on the proceeds of maritime trade and which housed and nurtured communities of cultures across the Indian Ocean world. These networks were known in Europe, whose richer citizens were able to partake in some of the goods that were traded – but at a price.

Europeans on the Maritime Silk Routes

For years, the Portuguese court had been searching for a direct route into these markets. Year by year their fleets ventured further south along the East African coast in search of a way to capture a slice of the spice trade for itself. 1498 CE, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, first entered the Indian Ocean. The port of Kilwa was then seized by the Portuguese. A new power and a new architecture had entered the Maritime Silk Routes.

Almost a century later, in 1583 CE, a Venetian galley, *Gagliana Grossa* (named after the Gagliano family, its Venetian owners), was travelling from the port of Venice to Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) (Chapter 10), when it hit a rock off the islet of Gnalić along the Adriatic coast. Now known as the Gnalić shipwreck, the *Gagliana Grossa* carried a significant cargo of raw materials, and semi-finished and fully-finished products. On board were 5,000 window panes ordered by the *bailo veneto a Constantinopoli* for the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Murad III. The exchange of portable objects led to the transmission of craft techniques and visual characteristics between Venice and its Islamic trading partners, especially in glassware. The Venetian window panes recovered from the Gnalić shipwreck, along with another 500 or so glass goblets and other items, provide indisputable evidence. Three months before the ship sank, a fire had broken out in the Imperial Harem in Istanbul's Topkapı Palace, and the window panes were required for its reconstruction.

Other artefacts recovered from the wreck of *Gagliana Grossa* include a luxurious roll of purple floral silk damask (which takes its name from the Syrian city of Damascus, though it originated in ninth-century Tang China). It can be seen in paintings of the harem, along with architectural items, including 602 chandeliers in three styles (wall, ceiling and table), as well as construction materials, including British tin ingots and tin-coated steel plates, Saxon triangular brass bars, brass sheeting (folded and rolled) and brass wire, and circular and rectangular finished mirrors and mirror cast sheets for sale at the Islamic emporia.

Also identified were 1,800 Venetian white lead ingots, 14 Slovenian red cinnabar (mercury sulphide) ingots, yellow lead powder used as a pigment for colouring murals and painting floors and walls, and glazed ceramic products, along with a deposit of antimony trisulphide (a hardening agent used in church bells), as well as three bales of the finest silk as a tribute for the sultan's mother. A microcosm of the Renaissance world, the Gnalić shipwreck proves that Paolo Girardelli's notion of Istanbul, as the place where continents meet, is indeed correct. Istanbul stood at the crossroads of the overland Silk Roads and the Maritime Silk Routes. It was a gateway connecting worlds and civilisations, and it remains so today.

Like Istanbul, Seville in southern Spain also played a significant role in the ancient Maritime Silk Routes. The riverine port city became a crucial hub in the later stages of this historic trading network (Chapter 13). Its strategic location on the Guadalquivir River provided access to the Atlantic Ocean and the broader trade routes that linked Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, mainly via Manila, the hub of the galleon trade. The ships would sail annually from Acapulco to purchase a wide range of Asian goods, including silk, spices, porcelain, textiles, lacquerware and other luxury items (Figure 6). While in Manila, the Spanish established trade links with Ming merchants, who brought their goods to Manila in exchange for Spanish silver. Ming and, later, Qing goods were highly sought after in the Americas, further fueling the trade route's success.

Figure 6 Foliated plate with rocks, plants, and melons, Yongle period, fifteenth century

Porcelain painted with cobalt blue under a transparent glaze Jingdezhen ware, National Museum of Indonesia.

© Elena Paskaleva.

Once loaded, the ships would set sail back to Acapulco, where the valuable cargo would be sent overland to Veracruz and shipped back to Seville, the entry point for the European markets. The highly profitable galleon trade played a crucial role in the global economy of the time.

It facilitated the exchange of goods, cultures and technologies between Asia, the Americas and Europe and significantly impacted - socially and culturally – all the regions involved. The mingling of different cultures and mixing of Chinese, Spanish, and Indigenous architectural styles gave Manila a diverse, cosmopolitan, and uniquely Filipino feel (Chapter 3).

Conclusion

The Maritime Silk Routes do not enjoy the same renown as their land-based counterpart. The goods and passengers the ships landed at ports helped create new communities and stimulated the exchange of tastes, technologies, traditions, knowledge and beliefs. The maritime monuments discussed in this volume attest to the significant architectural heritage that survives on land and under the seas. On land, the archaeological record stretches back more than two millennia. The urban landscapes described by the eminent authors in this volume embody buildings whose architecture and adornment derived from different cultures and the waves of connection, circulation, and convergence between them. Yet the ships that plied the Maritime Silk Routes were, at that time, the most complex machines ever built, concurrently architectural masterpieces and mass transport, carrying people, cultures and commerce across the known world.

Whilst this third Part retraces the historical and geographical imprints of the architectural exchanges along the Maritime Silk Routes, it also considers the remains of ancient ships that ploughed the waves, moving the people, goods, information, ideas, customs, traditions, technologies, and materials that created the conditions for maritime cultural exchange, from port to port, the urbanised towns and cities that sprang up around those ports, as well as the maritime monuments and architectural masterpieces erected to honour, amongst others, the deities that protected those who braved the waves.

These monuments, many of outstanding universal significance, have witnessed the rise and decline of empires, extensive wars and extended periods of peace, feast and famine, resistance and resilience and crucially, centuries of cross-cultural dialogue and maritime cultural exchange and the insights and understanding it provides.

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Section I

THE INDO-PACIFIC

On the tenth day we reached the city of Kawlam (Quilon), one of the finest towns in the Mulaibār lands. It has fine bazaars, and its merchants are called Ṣūlīs (Chulia, South Indian Muslim traders). They are immensely wealthy; a single merchant will buy a vessel with all that is in it and load it with goods from his own house. The cathedral mosque is a magnificent building, constructed by the merchant Khwāja Muhadhdhab. This city is the nearest of the Mulaibār towns to China and it is to it that most of the merchants (from China) come. Muslims are honoured and respected there.

Ibn Battuta
The Travels of Ibn Battuta, 1325–1354

We have traversed more than one hundred thousand li (27,000 nautical miles) of immense water spaces and have beheld in the ocean huge waves like mountains rising sky high, and we have set eyes on barbarian regions far away hidden in a blue transparency of light vapours, while our sails, loftily unfurled like clouds day and night, continued their course (as rapidly as) a star, traversing those savage waves as if we were treading a public thoroughfare.

Zheng He
inscription on a tablet
he erected in 1432 in Fujian

Chapter 1

The Maritime Importance of Nanjing

By Dong Wei, Wang Yan and Yao Congcong

From a geographical aspect, Nanjing is different from traditional capital cities in China. It is the only capital city located in the southern part of the Yangtze River, which possesses unique marine culture, even if, geographically, it is a distance from the sea. Inheriting the foundations of the Maritime Silk Routes from the Qin (221–207 BC) to the Han (202 BC–220 CE) dynasties, Nanjing's marine connection with the East and Southeast Asian nations evolved from being a random and irregular state to one on a continuous and fixed path, providing the groundwork for the spread and interchange of cultures during the Six Dynasties period (222–589 CE). At the time, it was both the starting point and the centre of China's international exploration and interaction, and a centre to disseminate technology, ideas, rituals and so on. It was connected to the outside world by sea and was the end point of economic trade and cultural and religious exchanges between countries overseas and China via the Maritime Silk Routes, as well as being a centre for the secondary dissemination of influence in China. This chapter will interpret the relationship between the Maritime Silk Routes and Nanjing, focusing on the historical background behind the creation of the Maritime Silk Routes, routes and cultural exchanges, and the conservation of heritage sites.

Water-related urban siting and construction

According to archaeological findings, the earliest remains of human activities found in the Ape Man Cave, Tangshan, Jiangning County, Nanjing, date to 500,000–600,000 years ago, when early humans were still predominantly cave dwelling. With the development of agricultural production, clan-based settlements gradually emerged in the uplands of the present-day Qinhuai, Chu and Jinchuan rivers and highlands along the banks of the Yangtze River. These settlements were located on sites that were easily exposed to water incursions, although the higher topography could effectively prevent flooding. With long-term settlements, these types of mounds gradually accumulated thick cultural layers that formed terraced sites. Three thousand years ago, these terraced sites were found along the middle reaches of the Qinhuai River, the Jinchuan River basin along the Xuanwu Lake in the southwest and northeast of Nanjing, and in Liuhe and Pukou, and other sites. As the Hushu area (now Hushu Street) in the middle reaches of the Qinhuai River had a high concentration of settlements, sites of the same type in Nanjing, Zhenjiang and the Taihu Lake basin during this period became collectively known as 'Hushu culture'. There are many similarities between the Hushu culture and the Shang-Zhou cultures of the Central Plains in terms of pottery, rituals, and other cultural features. However, during this period, settlements in Nanjing were mainly scattered, and large cities and towns had not yet emerged.

During the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC), the confrontation between Wu State, Chu State and Yue State led to the development of the area along the river from Qixia Mountain to the northern Stone City. With the help of water transportation and the stationing of the military, activities related to agriculture, commerce and transportation gradually developed along the Yangtze River and Qinhuai River. During the Qin (221–207 BC) and Han (202 BC–220 CE) dynasties, a system of prefectures and counties was established, but the political, economic and cultural centres of the country were still concentrated in the Yellow River Basin, and the Jiangnan region was still at an uncivilized stage of development. Jianye city (present-day Nanjing) served as the prefectural seat of Danyang County until the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 CE) when the benefits of Nanjing's location started to become apparent and the city was gradually transformed from a 'peripheral area' to a 'central area'.

Capital construction and the Maritime Silk Routes

During the Six Dynasties period, Nanjing emerged as the capital of the southern regimes, and the Jiangnan region saw the first appearance of a national political centre, which broke the pattern of monopoly of the Yellow River culture of the Central Plains in the southern region. The establishment of the capital city had provided a solid political basis to develop national foreign activities, while maritime transportation remained of great significance in national economy strategies.

On the one hand, the northern wars blocked the conventional land routes for trade and enabled the development of the Maritime Silk Routes; marine trade became a spontaneous activity. On the other hand, river defence became a crucial national strategy for the relatively weaker southern regimes, and the government sponsored the shipbuilding industry and supported marine activities.

As an important achievement of human civilization, the Maritime Silk Routes served as a marine route for East-West trade by means of ancient navigation techniques under the influence of monsoons and ocean currents. These routes also provided a vital link for economic, cultural, religious and scientific exchanges between the various civilizations in the East and West. China's sea trade was first officially documented during the Qin and Han dynasties, and it grew significantly during the Six Dynasties period. The establishment of the capital city enabled Nanjing to serve as one of the gateways for the expansion of the Silk Roads system into Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia.

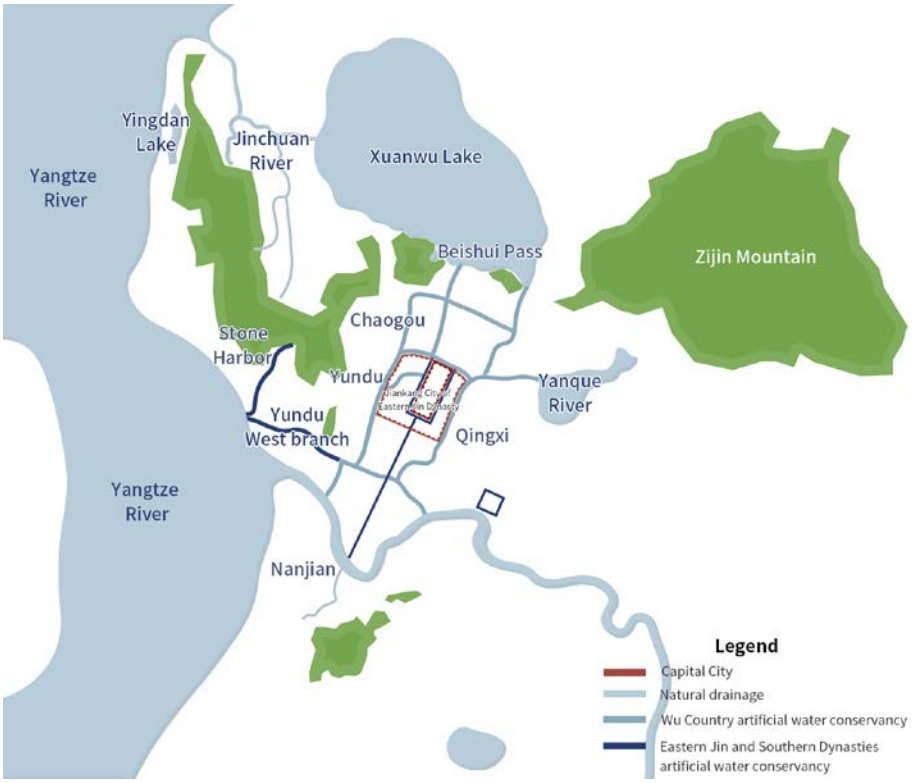
From a geographic perspective, the Zhongshan mountains and water system provided natural barriers for the capital city, while more artificial water systems were opened up during this historical period. The regional 'water-urban' network based in Nanjing during this period was initially created by establishing artificial water systems to connect the existing natural waterways with the rapidly growing cities and towns nearby. Eight of the 13 cities in Jiangsu Province are now mainly associated with the Maritime Silk Routes, including Nanjing, Yangzhou, Suzhou, Xuzhou, Lianyungang, Zhenjiang, Huai'an and Nantong, all of which have left an indelible mark on the history of the Silk Roads.

Navigation conditions of the Jiankang city and the surrounding region

During the 'Capital Era' of the Six Dynasties period, the regional water system and the mountains became an effective barrier against northern invasions. The Qinhuai River, Jinchuan River and Yangtze River jointly created the alluvial plains to the south and north of the city of Nanjing, while the early defence barrier was formed by the city walls. It was this interdependent location of 'city-water-river' that made the waterways important transportation routes, thereby laying the foundation for its role as a hub for commerce and culture (Figure 1). During the Six Dynasties period, the central governments favoured maritime trade in general and improved overall connectivity by building on existing waterways, which ensured the smooth and secure flow of goods and passengers, as well as facilitating irrigation and the defence of the cities. For instance, the situation of Maoling (later known as Jianye), which had no internal waterways other than the Yangtze River, was improved during the Three Kingdoms Period by the excavation of waterways, such as the Pogangdou Canal, the Chaogou Canal, the Dongqu Canal and the Chengbei Canal around the Qinhuai River.

One of the waterways that played a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the Wu State was the Pogangdu Canal, which originated from Xiaoqi of Jurong (southwest of present-day Jurong district, Nanjing) at its western end, and was identical to the Jurong River, a tributary of the Qinhuai River that reached Yunyang (present-day Danyang) in the east to connect with the Dantu waterway. This waterway established the connection between the Qiantang River system and the Yangtze River system, allowing Jiankang and the surrounding areas to avoid the natural hazards of the Yangtze River, and turning it into a vital river for transportation throughout the Six Dynasties period.

Figure 1 Navigation conditions in the Six Dynasties Period**



Plan © Yao Congcong.

From the Eastern Jin (317–420 CE) to the Southern Dynasty (420–589 CE), Jiankang city relied on the Yangtze River as its mainstay, and was joined to the Qinhuai River and the canals that were dug during the Eastern Wu State period to form a water network that internally linked the surrounding cities and externally linked the metropolis of the three counties in Jiangnan region. The regional water network bridged the three major water bodies of the Yangtze, Taihu and Qiantang rivers covering the southern part of the city and allowing for a constant flow of goods and materials from the important towns of Jiangling (modern Jingzhou, Hubei), Xunyang (modern Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province) and Gushu (modern Dangtu, Anhui Province) along the Yangtze.

This system connected the three counties of Wu (present-day Suzhou, Jiangsu Province), Wuxing (present-day Huzhou, Zhejiang Province) and Kuaiji (present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province) in the southern part of the city to the capital, relying on the connectivity of the Yangtze River with the regional water network system. The Jiangnan region thus formed a town system centred on Nanjing.

International transportation during the Six Dynasties period

Southeast Asia route

The Eastern Wu State (229–280 CE) carried out navigation activities during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 CE), with early military activities in Yizhou (current Taiwan District, China), Jiaozhou, Yulin, Zhuya and Daner (present-day Guangxi Province and Hainan Province) ensuring the security of the southeastern maritime route. From the fifth year of the Huangwu era (226 CE) to the third year of the Huanglong era (231 CE), Sun Quan dispatched a diplomatic corps, headed by Zhu Ying and Kang Tai, to explore Southeast Asian countries, travelling to the present-day Central South Peninsula, the Malacca region and the Bay of Bengal for over a decade. On their return, they wrote, *Records of Foreign Culture in Funan* (扶南异物志) and *Foreign Biographies in Wu State Period* (吴时外国传), respectively.

During the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420 CE) and the Southern Dynasty (420–589 CE), southern China had extensive diplomatic relations, economic trade and cultural exchanges with many Asian countries and regions via the maritime routes. According to *The Book of Liang - The Biography of the Barbarians* (梁书 · 诸夷传), envoys, merchants and monks from Southeast and South Asian countries, such as Funan (present-day Cambodia and Laos), Horodan (present-day Indonesia), Lion Kingdom (present-day Sri Lanka) and Tianzhu (present-day India), arrived in Jiankang city by the Maritime Silk Routes. The area around the Qinhuai River at the time was filled with "thousands of ships for envoys, ambassadors, merchants and monks".

During the Liang period (502–557 CE) of the Southern Dynasty, the Maritime Silk Routes entered Persia in West Asia via the Southeast Asia route, and Chinese porcelain and silk appeared in the Persian Gulf, with Persian carvings and paintings appearing in Jiankang city. The opening of the sea route also deepened religious contacts with India and Southeast Asia, with the famous monk, Fa Xian, leaving an important mark on the history of foreign exchanges during the Six Dynasties period via the Southeast Asia route. He translated numerous Buddhist laws and rule books at Douchang Temple and he wrote the first Buddhist historical book by a Chinese monk, introducing South Asian countries in *Records of the Buddhist Kingdom* (also known as 'Biography of Faxian').

Northeast Asia route

Throughout most of the Six Dynasties period, China was divided into a north and south regime, which led to a shift from the use of traditional land roads to the sea routes between China and the Korean Peninsula (Goguryeo, Silla and Baekje). One of the maritime routes began from Jiankang city to the estuary of the Yangtze River, northwards through the East Sea, Yellow Sea and Bohai Sea between both China and the Korean Peninsula. The opening up of this route not only restored economic and cultural contacts between the two countries, it also laid down the foundation for the opening of a future maritime route with Japan.

Trade with the Korean Peninsula resumed in the first year of the Jiahe period (232 CE) during the Three Kingdoms period, followed by no less than 30 reciprocal trade visits during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, which continued into the Southern dynasties; trade facilitated the production of silk and ceramic artefacts during the Six Dynasties period. Although there are records of visits to Japan during the Eastern Wu period, large-scale official visits were also recorded from the Eastern Jin period when hostilities between Goguryeo and Japan on the Korean Peninsula prevented the route from the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan via the Bohai Sea, southern Korea and the Tsushima Strait. From the second year of the Yongchu period (421 CE) of the Song Dynasty to the first year of the Qi period (479 CE), the King of Yamato established close maritime diplomatic relations with the Southern Dynasty against Goguryeo. The route began at Jiankang, entered the East China Sea from the Yangtze River, and headed north following the eastern coast of China and arriving at the Japanese port of Namba in present-day Chuo-ku, Osaka, via the west coast of Korea and the Korean Strait. The most famous of these journeys occurred in the second year of the Shengming era (478 CE) of the Song Dynasty when the central government dispatched skilled workers to Japan to transmit skills in sericulture, silk weaving and sewing. In the second half of the third century, a number of Chinese residents migrated to Japan along this route to avoid war, many of whom were skilled craftsmen, leading to the introduction of advanced Chinese production techniques in Japan.

Maritime trade flourished steadily during the Six Dynasties period, with overseas countries communicating with China at each time period when a wide variety of goods were imported and exported (Table 1). Compared with the maritime trade activities of the Qin-Han dynasties, which relied on the political and economic advantages of the capital city, the Maritime Silk Routes during the Six Dynasties period experienced a period of prosperity and expansion. The city eventually became the origin, and an important hub, of China's southern maritime civilization, which combined China's overland Silk Roads with the Maritime Silk Routes: the East China Sea Route and the South China Sea Route.

Table 1 The types of Chinese and foreign trade objects transported along the Maritime Silk Routes during the Six Dynasties period

Goods (or technology) exported from China	Country (or regions)	Goods (or technology) imported into China
Silk, brocade, ceramics, cinnamon, silk weaving technology, stone carving technology, architectural technology, poetry books, historical books, etc.	Korean Peninsula	Mink pelts, horses, crossbills
	Japan	Japanese brocade, thick waterproof silk with crimson and green
	Persia	Engraving, painting
	Roman Empire and Byzantine Empire	Glaze, adamas
	Tianzhu (present-day India)	Buddhist scriptures and statues, sandalwood, elephant training
	Funan, Lâm Ấp	Eaglewood, rhinoceros horn, ivory, jade, elephant training
	Langkasuka, Tendong, Pan Pan (Malay kingdoms)	Ivory, rhinoceros horn, pearl jade, sandalwood, Buddha statues, eaglewood
	Karitan, Kandari	Kapok, betel nut, glaze
	Boni (medieval state in Borneo)	Parrot, armour, glaze, kapok, conch cup, medicine

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Tribute trade of the Ming Dynasty and Zheng He's voyage

Shipbuilding industry

The early Ming Dynasty marked another peak in the development of the Maritime Silk Routes in Nanjing, which had been a national shipbuilding town from the Six Dynasties period to the Song-Yuan dynasties (960–1368 CE). After the capital of the Ming Dynasty was established (1366–1393 CE), the Xinjiangkou shipyard was opened in the Xinjiangkou area west of the capital city of Nanjing for naval and river defence. During this time, the shipyards in Nanjing mainly produced warships with combat functions and horse boats with a transport focus. However, after the capital was moved to Beijing during the Ming Dynasty (1421 CE), the production of warships for naval defence moved to the southeast coast, and the shipyards in Nanjing switched from warships to 'yellow' ships (imperial ships), 'treasure' ships (for official visits and transport purposes), canal ships (for river navigation), and for river defence purposes, setting up the corresponding shipyards. The boom in shipbuilding laid a solid foundation for the official maritime trade of the period and the establishment of the East Asian tribute system, with the Ming Empire at its core.

Table 2 Overview of the Ming Dynasty's maritime interactions with countries bordering the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean (1368–1423 CE)

Name of Ancient Countries	Present-day affiliation and location	Envoys from Ming Dynasty (number)	Number of Tributes	Route Direction
Annam	Vietnam and the north-east part of the South Central Peninsula	23	35	Maritime routes – Western routes (some were land routes)
Champa	Southern and central part of Vietnam	21	45	Maritime routes – Western routes
Siam	Thailand	14	60	
Yavadvipa	Java, Indonesia	12	32	
Sumatera	Northern part of Sumatra Island, Indonesia	5	17	
Kesultanan Melayu Melaka	Malaysia and southwestern part of Sumatra Island, Indonesia	5	16	
Sri Vijaya	Southern part of Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra	3	8	
Lambri	Northwestern part of Sumatra, Lower Reaches of Aceh River	3	9	
Kelantan	Southern part of Malay Peninsula	1	1	
Pahang	Southern part of Malay Peninsula	1	6	
Aru	Northern part of Sumatra Island	3	5	
Bengala	Bangladesh	1	5	
Kochi	Cochin, Southwestern part of India	3	4	
Pandya	West Coast Port of India	5	4	
Kollam	Present-day Kollam in Southwest coast of India	1	1	
Namburi	Kozhikode, Southwest coast of India	2	9	
Lani	Southwestern part of India		1	
Sofala	Maldives archipelago in the Indian Ocean	1	3	
Kotte	Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka		3	
Zufar	Dhofar, Southwestern of Oman, Arabian Peninsula		2	
Hormuz	Strait of Hormuz area, Southern part of Iran	1	4	
Aden	Republic of Yemen		4	
Malin	Republic of Kenya		2	
Mogadishu	Mogadishu, the Federal Republic of Somalia		3	
Barawa	Northeastern coast of Africa		3	
Burni	Northern part of Kalimantan Island and Negara Brunei Darussalam	4	10	Maritime routes – Eastern routes
Losung	Luzon Island, Philippines		1	
Saltanah Sulu	Sulu Archipelago, Philippines		5	
Kabasalan	Mindanao, Philippines		1	

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Abolition of 'Sea Ban' policy and the tribute system

In the early years of the Ming Dynasty, the 'Sea Ban' policy was adopted to restrict private maritime trade due to the Japanese invasion of the southeast coast. However, maritime trade did not cease completely during this period and the government's tribute trade became the main form of foreign trade during the Ming Dynasty. It was an ancient Chinese tradition to pay tribute to the emperor. Indeed, the unification of the world and the arrival of nations to China was a symbol of greatness and success for the feudal emperors. Indeed, it was a widespread part of the relations between the Chinese feudal dynasties and the rest of Central and Southeast Asia and East Asia from the third century until the eighteenth century. After the founding of the Ming Dynasty, the Ming emperor sent ambassadors to all countries in the East and West oceans. According to *A Record of the Ming Dynasty's Events* (明实录), the official annals of the emperors of Ming, the Chinese government sent ambassadors to countries around the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean 128 times in the 55 years after the founding of the Ming Dynasty, involving more than 50 countries and regions.

The most well-known missions were Zheng He's voyages to Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa from 1405 to 1433 CE. The journeys began in Nanjing and entered the South China Sea from the southeast coast, with He visiting more than 30 countries and regions, while combating piracy and conducting duty-free trade along the way. Zheng He's voyages linked the South China Sea with the Indo-Sri Lanka and the Persian-Arabian trading circles, extending to the Red Sea coast of Africa (Table 2). The tribute system built a two-way interactive political and economic engagement between China and other countries by using the Chinese tradition of 'ritual' to construct a commerce system focused on the South China Sea. Under the intermittent 'Sea Ban' Policy of the Ming Dynasty, the prosperity of private maritime trade along the southeast coast of China and in Southeast Asia was facilitated by the more stable political system and the navigable environment in place thanks to the two-way tribute and gift trade system (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

Figure 2 Export Commodities

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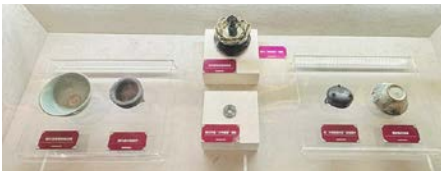
Figure 3 Export Porcelain



© Yao Congcong.

Figure 4 Export Spices

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Heritage site and spatial patterns

The silk production centre and shipbuilding base centred on Nanjing greatly facilitated Zheng He's voyages. Nanjing, as the origin of this maritime trade, the place of departure and the gathering place of goods and people, not only witnessed the glory of the Maritime Silk Routes, it also left behind vast cultural heritage for future generations (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Overview of Maritime Silk Road Heritage Sites in Nanjing**

Plan © Yao Congcong.

The most representative surviving sites of the Ming Maritime Silk Routes in Nanjing include: the Tianfei Palace (Figure 6); the Jinghai Temple and the Jingjue Mosque (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 6 The Tianfei Palace

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Figure 7 Jinjue Mosque constructed by the order of Ming Emperor Hongwu in 1388, detail main portal

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Figure 8 Jinjue Mosque constructed by the order of Ming Emperor Hongwu in 1388, detail courtyard entrance

© Yao Congcong.

Several sites are directly related to the live and legacy of Admiral Zheng He. These include the Longjiang shipyard site of Zheng He's treasure ships (Figures 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13); the Stone City; the former site of Zheng He's residence (Figure 14); the site of the Great Bao'en Temple; the site of the Daochang Temple; the tomb of King Pernia; the site of the Ming capital; the tomb of Hong Bao; the tomb of Zheng He; and the rich record of Nanjing by the Italian missionary, Mateo Ricci (1552–1610), in his journals.

Figure 9 Main gate of the Treasure Shipyard Site

Figure 10 The Longjiang Shipyard Site
A National Priority Cultural Relic Protection Site

Photos © Yao Congcong.

Figure 11 Restoration Model of a Treasure Ship

Figure 12 The Longjiang Shipyard Site
A Cultural Relic Protection Sites of Nanjing City

Photos © Yao Congcong.

Figure 13 Sculpture of Zheng He at the Longjiang Shipyard Site

Figure 14 The former site of Zheng He's residence

Photos © Yao Congcong.

These historical remains have an important spatial association with the landscape pattern of Nanjing in terms of their geographical distribution, with the Ming Imperial Palace being highly political as a place for politics and decision making for the Ming maritime trade, especially given its central location in the imperial city. Burial sites were mostly located outside the Ming city walls on the southern mountains, with the shipyards located on the Yangtze riverfront to the west of the city, and the temples mainly located on the banks of the Qinhuai River near important waterways in the south of the city. The spatial distribution of the sea silk heritage sites is clearly related to the Yangtze River, the Qinhuai River and the moat around the city walls, creating a 'River-Canal-City-Site' spatial arrangement.

Present integrated conservation and utilization

On 28 March 2015, the State Council authorized and issued the 'Vision and Actions to Promote the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road' together with the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce. The aim of this vision is to use the ancient Silk Roads' to establish economic partnerships with countries along the route so as to jointly create a community of interests, responsibilities and destiny, featuring mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural tolerance with the theme of 'peace and development'. In 2014, under the cooperation of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the 'Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor' was inscribed on the World Heritage List, which prompted local governments in China to actively participate in the declaration of 'Silk Roads' and 'Maritime Silk Routes'. In March 2016, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage held a special meeting in Beijing on the application of the Maritime Silk Roads and clearly included Nanjing in the list of application cities.

Nanjing had become an important city on the Maritime Silk Routes owing to its special geographical and spatial features and its prominent capital status. It made a great contribution to the extension of the 'Maritime Silk Routes' and its development. As an integral part of the heritage system of China's Maritime Silk Routes, Nanjing has significant value. Its historical relics have witnessed the gradual growth of the city along the Yangtze River estuary, with the same level of importance as the Pearl River estuary. The organic combination of the 'overland routes' and the 'maritime routes' of the Silk Roads contributed to the gradual diversification of Nanjing's urban landscape, highlighting China's outstanding contributions to global navigation and maritime peace. At the same time, it amplified and enriched the significance of its Maritime Silk Routes' heritage. Today, the 'Chinese Section of the Silk Roads', which includes Nanjing, is on the World Heritage Tentative List. This work will continue to make progress through the combination of basic research, the preparation of heritage protection planning, safeguarding the infrastructure of the heritage sites, and the development of the application process.

At the same time, under the urban circle 'Belt and Road', the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Yangtze River Delta regional integration strategy, urban and regional historical and cultural resources will be used to create a new space to engage with the outside world and to achieve new breakthroughs in reform and development.

Conclusion

Nanjing, as the ancient capital of the Six Dynasties, witnessed the prosperity of cultural exchange, handicrafts and commercial development, religious dissemination, and the development of marine culture between the north and south of China. With the construction of the '21st Century Maritime Silk Roads' and the proposal of the national 'Belt and Road' initiative, the protection of the Maritime Silk Roads and its nomination for World Heritage has become a major cultural initiative. Local governments attach great importance to exploring historical and cultural resources, mobilizing forces from all walks of life to actively declare world cultural heritage status, and to implement national development strategies, shape the local image, and promote regional economic development. Nanjing and its Jiangnan urban agglomeration have established stable, long-term connections with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and South Asia in terms of economic development, having always benefitted from their strong complementary industrial structure. In this new context, Nanjing and Jiangnan urban agglomeration should grasp the historical opportunity of the '21st Century Maritime Silk Routes' and reach cultural consensus with countries along the 'Belt and Road Initiative' with its roots in history. This will lead to deeper bilateral interaction, the joint creation of trade, culture and tourism corridors, and the establishment of a cooperative, sharing and mutually beneficial framework.

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Chapter 2

Quanzhou

The World Emporium at the East End of the Maritime Silk Routes

By Qiang Wang

Quanzhou in southeastern China was a prominent port during the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1271–1368) dynasties. It was among the largest and busiest ports in the world, serving as a hub for the exchange of goods, ideas and cultures across various regions of the world. In 2021, the city was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as 'Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China', with its 22 historical sites and monuments scattered throughout the coastal city.

The architectural landscape of Quanzhou bears the imprint of extensive maritime trade and cultural amalgamation spanning the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties. Within its boundaries, Buddhist and Hindu temples, pagodas, mosques, and Islamic monuments harmoniously blend Chinese and foreign architectural styles, profoundly influenced by diverse cultures, notably from the Islamic world and Southeast Asia.

These architectural marvels in Quanzhou eloquently testify to the integration of diverse styles, both domestic and international, underscoring the city's pivotal position as a centre of commerce and cultural exchange. This chapter examines the fusion of architectural forms in Quanzhou, shedding light on the city's intricate connections with China, Asia, and the wider world during the Song and Yuan dynasties.

Historical overview

Quanzhou's role in the premodern world trade system

The port city of Quanzhou played a pivotal role in the premodern world trade system. Its position as a bustling trading port and cosmopolitan centre of trade was acknowledged by prominent travellers, such as Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo. The city's strategic location facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas and cultures between China and the rest of the world through links with other ports in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. While documentation exists for some of these ports, it is possible that others have remained undocumented.

Quanzhou was a hub for cultural and trade exchange, resulting in the city's unique blend of cultures and traditions during the Song and Yuan dynasties. The integration of foreign architectural styles into traditional Chinese structures resulted in a distinctive style that reflected the city's receptiveness to external influences (Figure 1). Notable examples of this are the twin pagodas in Kaiyuan Temple (Figure 2) and Luoyang Bridge, both of which were constructed during the Song Dynasty and exhibit a combination of Chinese and Indian architectural elements.

Quanzhou was home to not only Buddhist temples but also Taoist temples, Confucian academies and Islamic mosques, showcasing the city's religious diversity. The Qingjing (Ashab) Mosque, for example, featured an elaborate prayer hall decorated with intricate carvings and calligraphy that combined Chinese and Islamic artistic traditions.

Figure 1 West Street of Quanzhou

© Pan Deng.

Furthermore, Quanzhou's connections with other areas favoured the emergence of a unique culinary culture. The local cuisine featured a medley of flavours, including cinnamon, cloves and pepper imported from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Figure 2 The Twin Pagodas of Zayton

© Su Dehui.

In addition, Quanzhou's artistic and literary culture flourished, evidenced by the creation of highly coveted ceramics and the rise of poets and writers who drew inspiration from the vibrant port and cosmopolitan ambiance.

In summary, Quanzhou's significance as a hub for cultural and commercial exchange during the Song and Yuan dynasties is evident in the city's unique blend of cultures and traditions. The incorporation of foreign architectural styles, the diversity of religious structures, the influence of regional cuisine, and the development of a vibrant artistic and literary culture all reflect the city's openness to foreign influences and its interconnectedness with other regions.

Quanzhou as a significant maritime urban centre during the Song-Yuan dynasties: an analysis of trade, cultural diversity and urbanism

Quanzhou represents a notable example of maritime urbanism, which refers to the development of cities arising from maritime trade and commerce. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Quanzhou served as an important port city and a thriving centre of trade. The city's coastal location on the South China Sea made it a vital hub for maritime trade, connecting China with other parts of the world. Its diverse population of merchants, scholars and travellers from various regions contributed to a unique blend of cultures and traditions.

Quanzhou's rich history is evident in its numerous historical sites, including the Kaiyuan Temple and the Qingjing Mosque, which showcase the city's diverse cultural and religious heritage. In addition, harbour infrastructure facilities were constructed to support the development of maritime trade and urbanism. Scholars have studied Quanzhou as a significant centre of the medieval maritime Silk Trade Routes, linking coastal China, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and other regions of the world.

The Imperial Court and the ruling elite recognized the value of Quanzhou's harbours for trade, leading to the relocation of the Song Dynasty's Southern Clan Office to the city. This move enhanced Quanzhou's political standing and contributed to its economic growth, transforming it into a centre for luxury goods and attracting talented individuals and merchants from around the world.

Consequently, Quanzhou's trade connections extended far beyond the Chinese coast, serving as a gateway to Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. The city's port was renowned for its import of exotic goods, such as spices, textiles, precious stones and rare animals, which were then distributed throughout China and beyond. Quanzhou's role as a hub for the maritime exchange of goods facilitated the spread of new technologies, ideas and cultural practices. The city's rich architecture, monuments and urban design reflect the diverse groups that interacted there, underscoring the Imperial Court's support for Quanzhou's success in maritime trade.

Recent scholarship highlights Quanzhou's significance as a maritime hub, with its merchants establishing trade connections and settlements as far as Southeast Asia, the Persian Gulf and East Africa. The city's inclusiveness is evident in the fact that foreign maritime merchants, such as Muslim merchants, held high positions in coastal Fujian and managed their communities in Zayton in Quanzhou themselves. For instance, Pu Shougeng, one of the wealthiest Muslim merchants in Fujian, was appointed Superintendent of Maritime Trade in Quanzhou around 1250, a position he held for almost thirty years and which he used to amass great wealth.

To fully appreciate Quanzhou's importance as a maritime urban centre during the Song and Yuan dynasties, it is essential to examine its cultural diversity, urbanism and trade. UNESCO recognizes Quanzhou's historical prosperity as the 'Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China', which highlights its active participation in maritime trade, regional integration and inclusive culture.

Scholars have extensively studied the era of Quanzhou's prosperity, focusing on diverse topics as Chinese maritime networks, the Song Imperial Clan's role in overseas trade, and the impact of urbanism on economic growth. Quanzhou's history serves as a remarkable example of how trade and cultural exchange can transform cities and societies, making it a fascinating subject for scholars and tourists alike.

Quanzhou's strategic location at the intersection of the Maritime Silk Routes was central to its commercial success. Traders from various regions brought diverse goods, such as textiles, spices, ceramics and precious metals, which were then traded in the city's bustling markets. The city's cosmopolitan character is reflected in its architecture, which blends Chinese, Islamic and other styles (Figure 3).

Quanzhou's importance as a centre for maritime trade is reflected not only in its cultural and historical significance but also in its economic growth and prosperity. The city's harbours and infrastructure were specifically designed to accommodate large vessels and facilitate efficient trade, which – along with the support of the Imperial Court – helped Quanzhou become a hub for international trade and luxury goods. As scholars continue to study Quanzhou's maritime urbanism, they gain valuable insights into the importance of cultural exchange and inclusivity in shaping cities and societies. Quanzhou's rich history serves as a reminder of the power of trade and cultural exchange in shaping societies and allowing cities to prosper.

Figure 3 Clock Tower in West Street

© Zheng Xinchuan.

Quanzhou's cultural and architectural diversity: a result of cultural and trade exchange

Quanzhou's architectural and cultural diversity is a testament to its history as a major trading hub during the Song and Yuan dynasties. This chapter seeks to highlight the unique fusion of cultures and traditions that emerged as a result of this exchange, as evidenced by its architecture, monuments and urban planning.

During the Tang Dynasty, Buddhist temples and pagodas integrated foreign architectural elements into their designs. This blend of styles continued during the Song Dynasty with the Kaiyuan Temple and Qingjing Mosque, which incorporated both Chinese and foreign influences. The construction of seven mosques during the Yuan Dynasty demonstrates the city's openness to foreign cultures and the growing presence of some 40,000 Muslim merchants in the region.

Quanzhou's cultural heritage is a testament to the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties' embrace of foreign cultures and ideas. The city was known as the "greatest haven in the East" by medieval travellers like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta due to its crucial role in the exchange of ideas and cultures along the Maritime Silk Routes. Through an exploration of Quanzhou's architecture, monuments and urban planning, we can gain a deeper understanding of its significant impact on the cultural and economic landscape of medieval China and beyond.

Architectural and urban development as indicators of Quanzhou's maritime prosperity (1000–1400)

Quanzhou has a long history that dates back to 686 CE, and its prosperity and growth owe much to maritime trade that flourished between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Quanzhou grew into one of the largest ports in the East, attracting foreign merchants and a rapidly growing population thanks to its strategic location at the confluence of two rivers flowing into Quanzhou Bay as well as a large body of water with several coves.

The impact of medieval maritime trade on Quanzhou's urbanization can be observed through its local manufacturing sites and cultural heritage. Quanzhou's location on the Maritime Silk Routes made it a hub for trade between China and the Indian Ocean region, resulting in a multicultural society with diverse religious and ethnic groups. The influx of foreign merchants and scholars enriched the city's cultural and intellectual life and contributed to its economic growth.

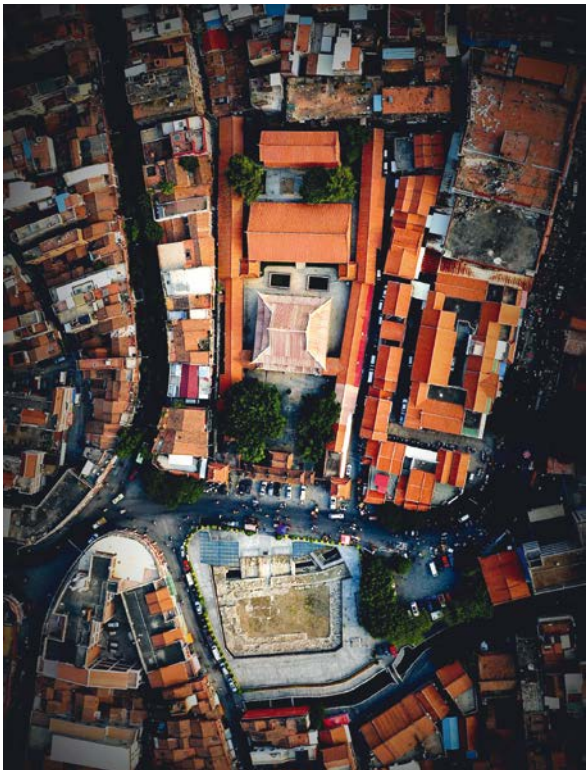
The development of Quanzhou's port infrastructure was pivotal to the city's urbanization and economic growth. The natural harbours, protected by a series of islands, were expanded along Quanzhou Bay and upgraded to accommodate the growing trade volume, resulting in the construction of warehouses, wharfs and other necessary facilities. The city's urbanization also had a significant impact on the rural areas, leading to the expansion of trade-oriented manufacturing industries and regional integration between the harbour and its hinterland. Quanzhou's exports, such as tea, silk and ceramics, contributed to the city's prosperity. According to ancient writers, Quanzhou's silk was superior to that of Hangzhou.

Urban development in Quanzhou (686–1368)

The urban landscape of Quanzhou can be traced back to the establishment of the Kaiyuan Temple in 686 CE. By the Five Dynasties period (905–970 CE), the city had outgrown its walls and earned the name 'Zayton', from which the English word 'satin' is derived. During the Tang Dynasty, Quanzhou rose as a thriving political, economic and cultural centre, and by the Song and Yuan dynasties, it emerged as one of the largest ports in the East. Its strategic location between two rivers and a vast water body with several coves made it a highly suitable site for maritime trade. The city's expansion is evident from the construction of three concentric walls by the tenth century, with each wall allocated specific offices and temples.

In 1230, Quanzhou erected the external wall and designed the Deji Gate (Figure 4) with specific sections allocated to foreign maritime trade communities to help protect them, while the fortified walls were expanded during the Yuan Dynasty. However, the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty contributed to the decline in Quanzhou's maritime trade, resulting in many merchants fleeing to Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the city's layout and historical sites continue to reflect its history of cultural exchange.

Figure 4 Site of Deji Gate



© Quanzhou Heritage Centre/Quanzhou Maritime Museum.

Quanzhou's prosperity during this period is evident in its extensive architectural heritage, including in such religious buildings as the Kaiyuan Temple, which covers more than 78,000 m^2 and houses several halls, pagodas and other structures. In addition, the city's diverse population led to the construction of mosques, pagodas and temples, showcasing the range of religions practised in the area. Prime examples include the Ashab Mosque (Figure 8), one of the oldest mosques in China dating back to the eleventh century, and Cao'an Manichaean Temple, one of the last remaining temples of its kind in the world situated south of the city.

Quanzhou's well-preserved ancient streets, such as Tumen Street, provide glimpses into its past. The city's multicultural atmosphere was enriched by the influx of foreign scholars and merchants, resulting in a diverse population with different ethnic and religious groups.

Overall, Quanzhou's urbanization was a result of flourishing maritime trade between China and the Indian Ocean region from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Its strategic location, natural harbours and port infrastructure made it a hub for trade and cultural exchange, attracting foreign merchants and a diverse population. Quanzhou's architectural heritage and ancient streets provide insights into its past as a centre for maritime trade and cultural exchange during medieval times.

Exploring the multicultural landscape of Quanzhou: from maritime trade to diverse influences and urban development

Quanzhou owes its growth and development to its maritime trade history, which has given the city a unique urban layout and planning, influenced by cultural exchange. The city's port was the centre of commercial activity, with different areas designated for various ethnic groups and trades. The streets and alleys were designed to accommodate the movement of goods and people, with wider streets for carts and narrower alleys for pedestrians. The city's three concentric walls, constructed during the Song Dynasty and expanded during the Yuan Dynasty, encircled the city, with gates controlling access to the different parts of the city. The Deji Gate, built during the Yuan Dynasty, symbolized Quanzhou's prosperity and power as a port city.

Quanzhou's rich history is evident in the evolution of its architectural and cultural heritage. The city's religious and Muslim communities represent a fusion of architectural styles and cultural practices, demonstrating the diverse influences that shaped the city's past. Despite the decline of maritime trade after the Song-Yuan period, Quanzhou's Muslim communities continued to evolve and adapt. One notable example is the Qingjing Mosque, which combines both Chinese and Islamic architectural elements. The Ashab Mosque, the only surviving mosque among the seven in Quanzhou's history, is now preserved as the Qingjing Mosque and is often referred to by its Chinese name, bearing witness to the fluctuations of the Muslim community in Quanzhou. Furthermore, the city's Muslim community developed their own unique cultural practices, such as 'Hui-style' cooking, which blends Chinese and Islamic culinary traditions, as well as a distinctive form of calligraphy merging Arabic and Chinese scripts.

During the Ming Dynasty, Quanzhou's urban development shifted towards its inner city. Temples, academies and ancestral halls were constructed, and the city's urban layout and planning improved with wider streets and more public spaces, reflecting Confucian principles of social order and harmony. Handicraft industries, such as ceramics and textiles, were developed, further diversifying the city's economy.

Although the economy declined during the Qing Dynasty, as a result of declining maritime trade and increased foreign competition, Quanzhou's urban development continued. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Quanzhou's urban development accelerated with the construction of new infrastructure and rapid economic growth. Quanzhou's cultural heritage and historic sites were also preserved and restored. Today, Quanzhou is a bustling city of over eight million people, known for its rich cultural heritage, history of maritime trade and diverse industries.

Quanzhou's multicultural architectural heritage: a reflection of its diverse and rich history

Quanzhou boasts a diverse array of religious buildings that reflect its multicultural influences. Merchants, scholars and religious leaders brought architectural styles from Indian, Arab and Persian cultures to Quanzhou, resulting in a blend of architectural styles, including those of Nestorian Christians. These buildings, including mosques, temples and Christian monuments, highlight the city's importance as a centre for cultural exchange.

Furthermore, Quanzhou's cultural and religious diversity is evident in the Zayton Cross, a unique symbol found on stone carvings in the city. Combining elements of Christianity and Chinese culture, the cross represents the Ten Commandments and demonstrates the blend of cultural influences that occurred during the Tang and Song dynasties.

The blending of diverse architectural styles in Quanzhou can be seen not only in its religious heritage sites but also in the grand homes of wealthy merchants. These homes possess intricate courtyards, gardens and decorative elements inspired by the Indian Ocean region, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of Quanzhou's society.

Quanzhou's inclusivity and openness to people of different cultures and religions are also evident in the Star of David, a symbol associated with the Jewish community, engraved on a Chinese stone drum and used as a decorative element in front of the homes of Jewish merchants who once lived in Zayton, Quanzhou.

Among the city's prominent religious structures is the Kaiyuan Temple, which combines traditional Chinese and foreign architectural styles. The temple features stone pillars depicting scenes from the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Similarly, the Qingjing Mosque, one of China's oldest and most important mosques, showcases a blend of Chinese and Islamic architectural styles, with Arabic calligraphy and Islamic inscriptions highlighting the city's Islamic scholarship and trade. Other unique religious structures, such as the Cao'an Manichean Temple, Tianhou Palace, and Twin Pagodas, showcase Quanzhou's diverse religious practices throughout different dynasties.

Quanzhou's architectural heritage offers valuable insights into the city's past and its impact on the cultural and architectural landscape of the region. Its Muslim communities' unique history of blending Chinese and Islamic architectural styles is evident in the Ashab Mosque built in 1009. Its gate tower, the Fengtian Altar and the Mingshan Chamber feature a blend of Chinese and Islamic design elements. The gate tower's platform was used by worshippers to observe the moon and determine the start of Ramadan, and the tower itself boasts a carved lotus relief dome that symbolizes sanctity and purity, along with Qur'anic verses inscribed in its structure. Stone tablets to the east of the gate document the mosque's restoration during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, while a 1407 imperial edict from the Ming emperor Zhu Di, found on a tablet facing the entrance, declared protection for the mosque and its followers.

In Quanzhou, in addition to the Ashab Mosque, several local museums house fragments of architectural stone carvings, tombstones and stone inscriptions collected from ancient Hindu temples, Islamic cemeteries, as well as Nestorian Christian tombstones written in the Syriac language. There were seven mosques known to have existed in Quanzhou, which were constructed by believers from various parts of Western Asia, but they were damaged during the years 1357–1366.

Among the three oldest mosques, the Ashab Mosque, excavated in 1979, revealed Song Dynasty ruins two metres below ground. The Qingjing Mosque, the second mosque, was identified during the Southern Song Dynasty by a Chinese inscription about its restoration found on a stone stele near the South City Gate of Quanzhou. The third mosque, the Yemen Mosque, built during the Song Dynasty, was located in the Jintoubu community outside the Tumen Gate. The lintel of the primary gate of the Yemen Mosque, believed to be a diabase stone with Arabic characters, was discovered in the mosque's ruins in 1940 when the Tong Huai Gate was demolished.

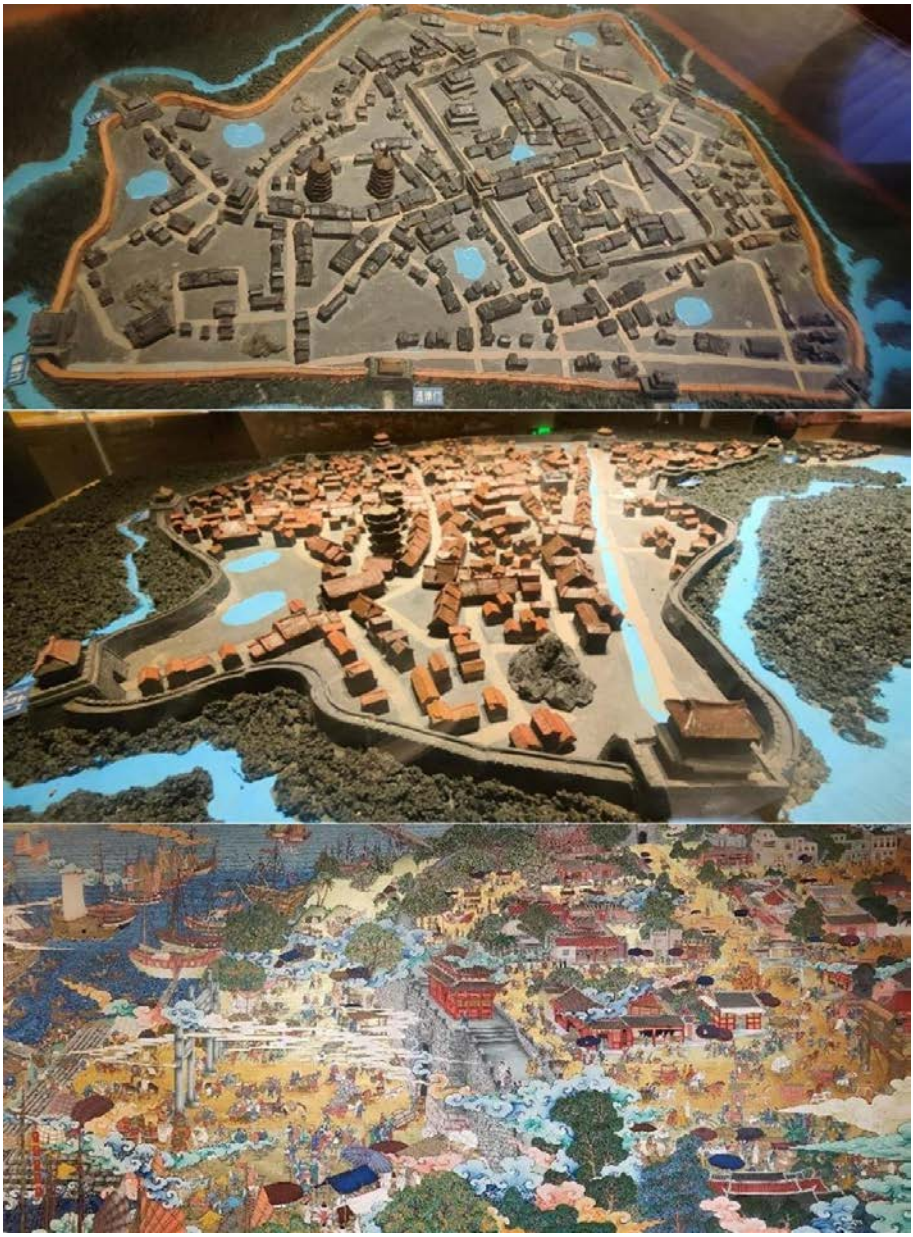
Another lintel, engraved with donation inscriptions found at the site of the South Gate, belonged to the Mohammed Mosque, which was located near the South Gate and destroyed at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. Although the construction and destruction dates of the mosque are uncertain, the inscription on the lintel indicates that Naxide (Nakhid Asmar al-Mushai al-Din) rebuilt the mosque in 1322. Two fragments with Arabic inscriptions engraved on both sides were discovered from the same stone lintel and are believed to be from the East Gate Mosque.

The archaeological excavation of these sites confirms their Islamic identity and suggests that they were significant religious sites in Quanzhou's history. In total, seven sites are known to have had an Islamic identity in Quanzhou. The unique fusion of Chinese and Islamic architectural styles in Quanzhou's religious structures highlight the city's role as a centre of multicultural exchange and trade. It reflects the harmonious coexistence of different cultures and religions, and the diversity and inclusiveness that Zayton's Franciscan bishop, Andrew of Perugia, praised in a letter written in 1326. By preserving and showcasing this architectural heritage, Quanzhou is keeping alive the memory of its past and promoting cultural exchange and understanding through to the present day.

Notable landmarks in Quanzhou: witnesses of maritime prosperity and urbanism

Quanzhou's cultural heritage and urban development (Figure 5) owe much to its strategic location on the Maritime Silk Routes. This position facilitated extensive trade and cultural exchange with foreign merchants and scholars, leading to the city's economic growth and emergence as a multicultural society with diverse ethnic and religious groups. The city's port infrastructure, including its natural harbour protected by a series of islands, played a critical role in driving its urbanization. The expansion and improvement of port facilities, such as warehouses, wharfs and other structures supporting trade, significantly contributed to the city's economic growth.

Figure 5 Urban Development of Quanzhou in the Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties



© Jun Wang. Artwork of Deji Gate by WU Jinghua & Saixiong Culture.

The unique blend of architectural styles, cultural practices and religious traditions in Quanzhou reflect the enduring imprint of its history of maritime trade and cultural exchange. Notable landmarks serve as a testament to the importance of cultural exchange and the pivotal role of ports in facilitating such exchanges.

One of these landmarks is the Confucius Temple and School built during the Northern Song Dynasty in the tenth century. This temple was one of several Confucian educational complexes in the city, reflecting the high value placed on education by merchant families. This period saw Quanzhou become a centre for the imperial civil service examination, providing insights into the city's cultural legacy, the impact of the imperial examination system, and how maritime trade contributed to the region's prosperity and growth.

Other notable landmarks in Quanzhou that contributed to its position as a hub for maritime trade and cultural exchange include the recently inscribed World heritage Site of Maritime Trade Office, the Deji Gate, the Jiuri Mountain Wind-Praying Inscriptions, the Tianhou Temple and the Zhenwu Temple.

These landmarks reflect both institutional and non-institutional support for the development of maritime urbanism in Quanzhou. For example, the Site of Maritime Trade Office, established in 1087, granted Quanzhou the right to participate in international exchange, boosting its growth as a hub of maritime trade and cultural exchange. The Jiuri Mountain Wind-Praying Inscriptions record prayers and ceremonies for smooth sea voyages, which indicate the challenges of navigation during that time and provided spiritual and cultural support for seafaring activities.

The site of Deji Gate, the only gate remaining of the seven in Quanzhou, was built in 1230 to enclose foreign maritime merchants. Archaeological excavations have uncovered stone carvings representing various religions like Hinduism, Nestorianism, Islam and Buddhism, thus revealing the diverse religious beliefs of the communities. Written records and stone carvings also confirm the presence of Jewish and Catholic communities near Deji Gate, further emphasizing the multicultural nature of the region.

The Tianhou Temple is the oldest and most important temple for the worship of the sea goddess Tianhou, providing spiritual support for seafarers and navigators. The Zhenwu Temple, a Taoist temple that dates back to ancient times, was established as a site for the worship of Emperor Zhenwu, widely recognized as the sea god who guided sailors and offered direction in navigation. As a result, the temple served as a significant religious centre for sailors, traders and other seafarers who sought the deity's protection during their journeys.

All these landmarks reveal how Quanzhou's history is intertwined with maritime trade, with its cultural exchange pivotal in shaping its development. The Site of Maritime Trade Office formed the legal foundation for international trade, while the Jiuri Mountain Wind-Praying Inscriptions exemplify the spiritual and cultural support for seafaring activities.

Notable landmarks in the transportation network of Song-Yuan Quanzhou

The Luoyang Bridge (Figure 6), situated at the mouth of Quanzhou Bay, stands as a remarkable embodiment of China's rich historical and cultural legacy, particularly its important role in the Maritime Silk Routes. Built in the eleventh century, the bridge is a testament to the trade of goods, people and ideas that took place along the maritime routes during that time. Its magnificent stone carvings, which include a central Buddha sculpture and four stone pagodas at both ends, have earned it the distinction of being one of the most impressive bridges in the region, as noted by Galeote Pereira, a Portuguese soldier of fortune in 1555.

The construction of the Luoyang Bridge was a feat of advanced engineering techniques, utilizing biological engineering in the form of secretions of thousands of oysters cultivated around the footstones and piers to cement the stones together. The bridge's raft-style foundation is composed of a stone dam on the riverbed and piers with staggered joints made of large stone slabs. The massive slabs were lifted into place using buoyancy force and waves to form the bridge surface. The centrepiece of the bridge is the Moon Buddha sculpture and the *dharani* of Five Dhyani Buddhas (Figure 6), which bless the travellers between Quanzhou and the regions around the Indian Ocean.

Figure 6 Moon Buddha sculpture of Luoyang Bridge

© Wu Yunxuan.

The Zhaohui Shrine, located at the northern end of the bridge, was built in the eleventh century to honour King Tongyuan, the Sea God, who blessed the construction and safety of the bridge. A memorial dedicated to Cai Xiang, the prefecture chief who facilitated the bridge's construction, is preserved at Qiaonan village. Both the shrine and the memorial retain their Song Dynasty stone foundations, serving as a testament to the longevity and timelessness of this remarkable structure.

Throughout the centuries, the Luoyang Bridge has played a pivotal role in facilitating the flow of goods, people and ideas along the maritime trade routes. Despite the passage of time, the bridge remains an enduring symbol of China's rich architectural and monumental heritage along the Maritime Silk Routes. Visitors to the bridge, such as Averil Mackenzie-Grieve in the 1920s, have described its "grand, brave way" of spanning the river and its "gray bulk [that] had personality and inspired respect".

Among the hundreds of stone bridges built during the Song Dynasty, the Dongguan Bridge in Yongchun County of Quanzhou stands out. This wooden bridge spans 85 m and features a mixed wood and stone structure with four piers and five arches. It is a rare corridor bridge in southern Fujian, utilising stone piers with raft-like foundations and wooden upper parts. Initially constructed in the fifteenth year of the Shaoxing period of the Southern Song Dynasty (1145), it is the only long corridor-style bridge in southern Fujian. The Dongguan Bridge is a testament to the material connection and regional economic cooperation between the mountainous areas and river ports for several centuries. Quanzhou's success as a maritime trade centre during the Song and Yuan dynasties relied on integrating regional economies across various industries. Despite multiple repairs over time, the bridge retains the distinct characteristics of Song Dynasty bridge architecture as a key cultural relic site.

The Luoyang Bridge provides a unique opportunity to explore China's cultural and architectural heritage, as well as its significant contribution to the growth of the Maritime Silk Routes. Furthermore, the Luoyang Bridge, along with the Dongguan Bridge, the Anping Bridge, the Shunji Bridge and other bridges and logistics facilities, served as vital links between the city's port and its hinterlands, highlighting the influence of the Song imperial clan and local elites in shaping Quanzhou's trade development. These landmarks offer a comprehensive perspective of Quanzhou's maritime heritage and its significance as a hub of trade and cultural interchange. This section examined the navigational markers that defined the transportation network of Song-Yuan Quanzhou, providing insights into the city's thriving maritime legacy.

The Wanshou and Liusheng pagodas: examples of Buddhist philosophy and architectural features in Quanzhou

The Wanshou Pagoda, also known as the Gusao Tower, is a remarkable example of Song Dynasty pagoda architecture in Quanzhou that was influenced by Buddhist philosophy. This octagonal structure, with its five storeys, was constructed from granite slabs during the twelfth century and serves as a symbol of Quanzhou's maritime history.

Ancient Quanzhou was adorned with numerous pagodas that served as markers for significant intersections, ferry crossings and harbours. Among them, the Wanshou Pagoda occupied a prominent position atop the highest point of the southern shore in Quanzhou Bay. Its primary function was to act as a signal tower, guiding ships along the west coast of the Taiwan Straits.

These stone pagodas seamlessly combined Chinese wooden structure building techniques with cultural influences from the Indian Ocean, symbolizing enduring granite monuments and embodying the spirit of the coastal people. They provided a vital sense of security for sailors, serving as constant reminders of potential hazards and urging them to maintain vigilance. Remarkably, despite enduring the relentless forces of typhoons, windstorms and earthquakes for over 800 years, the Wanshou Pagoda still stands proudly today. This remarkable resilience is attributed to its exceptional construction technology, a characteristic of Quanzhou's Song Dynasty pagodas.

The Liusheng Pagoda, another ancient navigation tower built in the fourteenth century, is another exceptional example of the city's wealth and influence during its prosperous era, but the Wanshou Pagoda stands out for its unique combination of Buddhist philosophy and architectural features. It is therefore a must-see landmark for anyone interested in Quanzhou's rich cultural heritage.

The legend of the Wanshou Pagoda, widely known among the overseas Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, further adds to its historical significance. According to the legend, a young woman, married to a maritime merchant, used to gaze out at the sea from this tower, eagerly awaiting her beloved's return. This story embodies the deep emotions of nostalgia and longing for the early return of travelling men and their families.

Structures such as the Wanshou and Liusheng pagodas reflect the influence of Buddhist philosophy and architectural features in their shape and stone-carving decorations. They played a vital role in Quanzhou's maritime trade, characterized by its essential port, and served as navigation markers for merchant ships. Together with other transportation and port facilities, such as the Shihu Dock, Estuary Docks, Anping Bridge and the site of Shunji Bridge, they provide a fascinating glimpse into Quanzhou's rich maritime heritage and its role in the medieval maritime trade network.

Exploring Quanzhou's rich history of export-oriented manufacturing

During the Song-Yuan periods, Quanzhou flourished as a bustling city renowned for its exceptional production of high-quality ceramics and iron goods. Notable among the city's kilns were the Cizao and Dehua kilns (Figure 7), which produced exquisite porcelain and ceramics. The Jinjiaoyi Mountain kiln complex, the largest and best-preserved Song Dynasty kiln site, catered to the demands of the maritime trade market by customizing ceramics with designs and patterns that were particularly popular in the Arab world. The Dehua kilns, one of ancient China's two greatest porcelain centres, produced stunning works of art that were decorated with intricate designs and blue underglaze during the thirteenth to the fourteenth century. These kilns and their products bear witness to Quanzhou's significant contributions to global trade and cultural exchange during this period.

Figure 7 A kiln site in Dehua

© Wei Fanghan.

Quanzhou was also a significant centre of iron production. The Xiacaopu iron production site played a crucial role in producing high-quality iron goods, including weapons, tools and farm implements, which were in high demand both domestically and abroad. Counterfeiting issues with iron coins during the Tang Dynasty potentially impacted maritime trade. However, a proposal to use bronze cash for domestic transactions and iron coins for foreign trade was rejected in 1405. Copper coins were thus the primary currency, and paper money was introduced during the Southern Song period. Silver was used for large business transactions, whereas gold only played a minor role in Quanzhou's maritime trade.

Monuments and landmarks in Quanzhou: witnesses to maritime exchange

During the Song-Yuan period, Quanzhou was a vibrant melting pot of cultures and communities that facilitated the exchange of ideas and commerce. Its strategic location and efficient local institutions made it a hub for cultural diversity. One of the most iconic landmarks of ancient Quanzhou is the Twin Pagodas of Zayton (Figure 2), which was described by Gustav Ecke and Paul Demiéville in their work *The Twin Pagodas of Zayton: A Study of Later Buddhist Sculpture in China* published in 1935. The Twin Pagodas, originally constructed more than 1,100 years ago in Kaiyuan Temple during its establishment in 686, were initially made of wood. However, due to two devastating fires, they were reconstructed using bricks and later transformed into their final form crafted from granite during the Song Dynasty. The Kaiyuan Temple underwent renovation during the Song and Yuan periods and became home to many important artefacts, including the wooden hull of a Song Dynasty shipwreck discovered in 1975 in Quanzhou bay.

The Thousand-Armed Guanyin Bodhisattva, a 9 m-tall statue carved from a single piece of wood, is one of the largest wooden sculptures in China. The Hindu stone pillars in the temple, brought in during repairs in 1637, showcase the Hindu cultural influence in Southeast Asia.

The Ashab Mosque (also known as the Qingjing Mosque, Figure 8) and the Lingshan Muslim Tombs are two significant landmarks that attest to Quanzhou's importance in medieval maritime exchange. The Ashab Mosque is believed to have been established in the tenth century and is the oldest Arab-style mosque in China, reflecting the religious and cultural influence of the Arab world in Quanzhou. The Lingshan Muslim Tombs overlooking the city date back to the Song Dynasty and are believed to be the final resting place of early Muslim saints.

Figure 8 Ashab Mosque

© Pan Deng.

Quanzhou was also a hub for Nestorian Christians and Franciscan missionaries, as reflected in the Zayton Cross and the tombstone of Bishop Andrew of Perugia. Tombstones inscribed with Syriac script and depicting the 'Cross-on-lotus' symbol serve as proof of the Nestorian presence in Quanzhou.

The Manichean site (also known as the Cao'an Temple), located in Jinjiang County, is an essential cultural landmark in Quanzhou and the only remaining site of Manicheism in China. The statue of Mani, the Buddha of Light, is carved into the temple's granite back wall and dates back to the Southern Song Dynasty.

Quanzhou's status as a major port city is well documented in the Quanzhou Maritime Museum, which opened in 2002. The museum's collection of over 10,000 artefacts and exhibits showcase Quanzhou's rich maritime history, including ship models, navigational tools, pottery and coins. The museum also features a replica of a Song Dynasty ship, providing visitors with an immersive experience of the city's maritime past.

In summary, Quanzhou's monuments and landmarks stand as a testament to its rich cultural heritage and its significance as a centre of maritime exchange during medieval times. The religious sites, cultural landmarks and artefacts that were left behind by the diverse communities that resided and traded in the city over the centuries serve as valuable resources for learning and reflection.

Cultural riches of Quanzhou: discovering the secrets of a medieval port city

In the nineteenth century, Japanese scholars conducted extensive research on the historical significance of Quanzhou. Later, Chinese scholars, such as Zhang Xingliang, Chen Wanli and Wu Wenliang, conducted field research, connecting Quanzhou to Zayton. Gustav Ecke and Paul Demiéville, who were affiliated with Amoy University, joined the fieldwork and published *The Twin Pagodas of Zayton: A Study of Later Buddhist Sculpture in China* in 1935. In 1957, Goodrich confirmed Zayton's importance as a historic port city in Asian history in his article 'Recent Discoveries at Zayton'.

During the demolition of the ancient city walls from 1938 to 1941, a high school teacher and local historian, Wu Wenliang, made a remarkable discovery of tombstones with Syriac inscriptions. These inscriptions provided evidence of the presence of the Nestorian Church in Quanzhou during the Song and Mongol dynasties. In 1957, Wu's *Religious Inscriptions of Quanzhou* made a significant academic contribution, linking the monuments and sites in modern Quanzhou to the medieval port city of Zayton.

Devoting over two decades of his life to studying the stone inscriptions in Quanzhou, Wu searched for fragments of carved stones in every corner of the city. He collected over 200 stone items and inscriptions from local gravesites and ruins of monuments of foreign religious communities that existed in Quanzhou during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Wu's preservation efforts were instrumental in bringing recognition to Quanzhou's rich history and cultural significance.

Wu's *Religious Inscriptions of Quanzhou* was the first major academic publication to link the monuments and sites in modern Quanzhou to the medieval port city of Zayton. His contribution solidified the city's place in the history of East-West maritime trade and exchange, and it emphasized the importance of community preservation of our collective cultural heritage.

Unveiling the magic of the flying apsaras in Quanzhou: a journey through time and culture

For centuries, Quanzhou has been renowned for its openness to cultural and artistic influences. One of the most striking examples of this are the flying apsaras (Mandarin: *feitian*) that have adorned the city for centuries (Figure 9). These celestial figures are a testament to Quanzhou's pivotal role in maritime trade and cultural exchange, offering a unique insight into the evolution of artistic representation in the city.

Figure 9 Quanzhou Feitian

© Qiang Wang.

To fully appreciate the beauty and cultural significance of the *feitian*, visitors can explore Quanzhou's museums and monuments. The Quanzhou Museum boasts the earliest known representation of the Tang Dynasty's flying apsara figure, with the Quanzhou Maritime Museum showcasing stone carvings from the Song and Yuan dynasties. Kaiyuan Temple visitors can marvel at 24 wooden carvings of flying apsaras that offer a fascinating example of how Hindu, Chinese and European influences were merged in the representation of the feitian in Quanzhou.

The architectural splendour of Quanzhou: a reflection of its rich cultural heritage

Quanzhou's architectural diversity is a remarkable representation of its vibrant maritime history and cultural exchanges. The city's prosperous trade relations and inclusive culture during its heyday are evidenced by its cultural artefacts, historical monuments, and distinctive red brick buildings. Quanzhou's architecture is a compelling testament to its rich cultural exchanges and diverse influences from faraway lands. Notably, the Kaiyuan Temple stands out with its Hindu pillars relocated from the remains of Hindu temples as well as a Song Dynasty wooden shipwreck discovered and preserved in 1975.

Despite initial resistance to the conservation of Quanzhou's heritage, scholars like Wu Wenliang have worked relentlessly to safeguard the city's cultural treasures. Their diligent efforts have led to the discovery of previously unknown architectural styles and historical sites, such as the unique blend of Arabic and Chinese architecture found in the Qingjing Mosque and the Twin Pagoda Towers of Kaiyuan Temple.

Thanks to the dedicated work of scholars and enthusiasts, Quanzhou's architecture is now recognized and preserved for future generations.

Enchanting Minnan architecture in Quanzhou

Enchanting Minnan architecture in Quanzhou, distinguished by its red brick buildings with swallow-tail ridges, not only stands out aesthetically but also enhances the stability and durability of traditional Quanzhou structures. The celebrated 'Red Brick and Grey Stone' style, showcasing red bricks, dark tiles and grey stone, has become the prevailing architectural style in the neighbouring areas of South Fujian and beyond, recognized as the distinctive Minnan architectural style.

The thousand-year-old industry of local stone carving, using locally sourced white granite and petrous bluestone to create decorative sculptures, also reflect Quanzhou's rich history and cultural heritage. Local dwellings, some of which were constructed from recycled brick and stone, following earthquakes, offer a glimpse into the city's architectural development. Tombstones, such as the Zayton Cross and Nestorian tombstones, also bear witness to the city's cultural exchanges.

A fascinating combination of past and present in the architectural heritage of Quanzhou

Quanzhou's architectural heritage is a fascinating blend of past and present, reflecting the city's rich history and its significance as a hub of cultural exchange along the maritime Silk Trade Routes. The iconic red brick buildings, with their swallow-tail ridges and intricate temple designs, showcase the religious and cultural values of the coastal residents of south Fujian. The use of materials, such as ceramic, oyster shell and granite, highlights the connection between the people and their oceanic environment.

This city has a long and diverse history, shaped by the overseas Chinese diaspora in Nanyang (Mandarin: 'Southern Ocean') and its dynamic maritime trade. Nanyang describes the large Chinese migrant community in the warm and fertile coastal regions of southern China and Southeast Asia. Quanzhou holds a special place in the hearts of the Nanyang community, with many returning to their ancestral home to reconnect with their roots and heritage.

Quanzhou's architecture also reflects the city's resilience in the face of natural disasters, such as earthquakes and typhoons. The use of recycled materials in construction, such as bricks and stones salvaged from damaged structures, is a testament to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the local people.

Charm of Quanzhou's *qilou* veranda overhang houses

It is exciting to experience the unique fusion of Western and Chinese architectural styles by exploring the world of Quanzhou's *qilou* veranda overhang houses (Figure 10). These houses, with their distinctive verandas, connected shaded corridors and internal layouts, offer a fascinating glimpse into the city's rich cultural and economic history.

Figure 10 *Qilou* veranda overhang houses and the installation exhibition of Cai Guo-Qiang and Wu Daxin

© Wang Qiang.

The *qilou* veranda style was introduced to Quanzhou in the 1920s and 1930s by overseas Chinese from Southeast Asia who combined Western veranda designs with the traditional red-brick architecture of South Fujian. This hybrid style has since become an iconic feature of the city's housing architecture.

Quanzhou's *qilou* veranda corridor houses on Zhongshan Street are so distinct that in 2001, UNESCO presented it with the 'Award of Excellence' for cultural heritage preservation in the Asia-Pacific region. These typical shophouses exhibit a fusion of Western classical architecture and traditional red-brick buildings. The street's arched corridors (or veranda-porches) offer both shade and protection from rain.

The study of these veranda houses provides valuable insights into their construction era, the social status of their owners, and other architectural features. The preservation of these historic homes is of immense significance, not only for architectural research but also for local tourism development, providing visitors with an opportunity to experience a fragment of Quanzhou's rich cultural heritage.

Unique oyster shell houses of Quanzhou's coastal Xunpu village

Xunpu village in Quanzhou offers a captivating insight into the city's maritime history and its deep connection to the sea. The village's reliance on the ocean for its sustenance and livelihood is reflected in the abundant use of oyster shells in construction. These unique oyster shell houses serve as a testament to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the villagers, offering another window into the city's cultural heritage.

In addition, Xunpu village exhibits an intriguing blend of traditional and modern architecture, where oyster shell houses coexist with contemporary buildings. The preservation of the oyster shell houses highlights the significance of safeguarding Quanzhou's cultural heritage and celebrating the innovative use of local materials in architecture. Xunpu village is an essential destination for visitors interested in exploring Quanzhou's rich maritime history and cultural heritage. The village's captivating combination of past and present fascinates visitors and scholars alike.

The preservation and challenges of Quanzhou's cultural heritage in the face of modernization and development

Quanzhou, a historic port city renowned for its role in maritime trade and cultural exchange, boasts a rich cultural heritage that faces significant challenges in the face of rapid modernization and development. However, the city has introduced various initiatives to safeguard its monuments and landmarks, including designating them as cultural heritage sites and establishing museums and cultural festivals to celebrate its heritage.

Furthermore, the city has developed a comprehensive plan for urban renewal and redevelopment that prioritizes the conservation of cultural heritage sites. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including the demolition and modification of historical buildings and landmarks to make way for new developments, as well as damage to cultural heritage sites caused by natural disasters.

To address these challenges, Quanzhou has implemented measures to protect and preserve its cultural heritage, such as conserving the overhang arcade buildings in Zhongshan Street and implementing strategies to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. These efforts help preserve the city's past by underscoring their significance in the history of maritime trade and the Silk Roads, while highlighting the impact of modernization and development on its cultural heritage. In summary, the preservation of Quanzhou's cultural heritage is crucial for the city's identity and for understanding its history as a hub of maritime trade.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of Quanzhou's rich history, architectural styles and cultural heritage. It highlights the city's crucial role as a hub of maritime trade and cultural exchange during the medieval period, showcasing its diverse architectural styles and iconic landmarks that reflect the intercultural influences that shaped its past. Moreover, the chapter examined the preservation efforts that the city has undertaken to protect its cultural heritage, as well as the challenges posed by modernization and development.

Quanzhou played a significant role in the world trade system during the medieval period, serving as a hub of maritime trade and cultural exchange along the Maritime Silk Routes.

Its connections with various cultures and communities across the world contributed to the spread of ideas, goods and technologies. By exploring Quanzhou's rich cultural heritage, we can gain a better understanding of the complex intercultural connections that characterized the Silk Roads and their impact on global history. Furthermore, the city's preservation efforts serve as a reminder of the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage sites for future generations.

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Chapter 3

The Urban History of Manila, the Philippines

By Michael D. Pante

Manila occupies a marginal position in the writing of the history of the Silk Roads. Even within Southeast Asian historiography, the capital city of the Philippines is only given a minor place in the recounting of the early modern period, a common lament among Philippinists.

Despite being a product of Asia's age of commerce, it is only quite recently that we see a surge in historical scholarship that gives prominence to the Philippines position as part of Southeast Asia. Indeed, Manila is largely depicted as a city that was heavily influenced by strong neighbours and conquering Westerners. Such a unidirectional depiction of Manila's development is narrow-minded, belied by its built environment. Its architectural history evokes a space that was not a mere recipient of knowledge from the outside but a melting pot of influences that gave birth to new and unique forms of knowledge and aesthetics. As part of the Maritime Silk Roads, it received a lot of Chinese influences, and as the nerve centre of Asia's Spanish colony, it was profoundly Hispanized. Nevertheless, the meeting of these traditions and the active involvement of the native population gave birth to an identity that could only be described as 'Filipino'.

Contextualizing pre-Hispanic Manila

The absence of the Philippines in many of the historical accounts of the Maritime Silk Roads is made even more conspicuous by the fact that, according to Chinese records, the archipelago's inhabitants managed to reach China before the Chinese arrived in the Philippines. Long before Spanish colonialism, the maritime societies in this part of Asia, including China, had long been conducting trade with Philippine communities.

Commercial exchanges between the Philippine islands and the Chinese mainland have continued since the tenth century. Chinese documents suggest that Ma'i (probably from present-day Mindoro) brought pearls and sea and forest products to the superintendent of Guangzhou in 982. Records show that Butuan, located at the northeast corner of Mindanao Island, sent tribute missions to Beijing in 1001. The document *Zhu Fan Zhi* (諸蕃志, An Account of the Various Barbarians), is one of the most important pre-Hispanic sources on Philippine history. Written by Zhao Rukuo (趙汝适, often transliterated as *Chao Ju-kua*), a superintendent of maritime trade and a customs inspector in Guangzhou, the document recorded the arrival of products, such as beeswax, pearls, tortoise shell, medicinal betel nuts, and cloth from Philippine traders. Archaeological evidence points to the existence of trade via Chinese junks between the mainland and places that are now part of modern-day Pangasinan, Zambales and La Union in the Philippines. Indeed, diplomatic-tribute missions as well as private commerce transactions took place.

Philippine communities also had robust commercial relations with its Southeast Asian neighbours prior to European colonialism. The latter half of the fifteenth century marked the beginning of the age of commerce in the region. Consequently, the period saw a shift in its urban tradition. Replacing the declining inland sacred centres of Pagan and Angkor were the port-centred riverine and maritime cities of Phnom Penh, Ayutthaya, Palembang and Melaka. Manila was one of those communities that benefitted from this shift.

However, unlike its neighbours, the Philippines had no precolonial, indigenous urban tradition. Although no settlement could be classified as definitely urban prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, there was nonetheless substantial commercial activity that happened in the settlements that dotted the archipelago.

The basic socio-political unit was the *barangay*, which comprised between 30 to 100 families. Historian Robert Reed argues that rather than urbanized cities, the largest communities in the precolonial archipelago, that is, Manila and Cebu, were bigger than the average *barangays*, labelling them as *suprabarangays*. Maynila, the precolonial name of Manila, was most probably the largest barangay, which on the eve of colonialism had around 2,000 inhabitants, including Chinese and Japanese merchants.

Manila's geography played a huge role in making the settlement a centre of trade. Manila Bay, which faces the West Philippine Sea as well as Maynila's coastline, gave the settlement a natural harbour. The Pasig River, which flows into Manila Bay, provided access to the Laguna de Bay and the hinterland of Luzon Island, which was teeming with natural resources that could be traded.

The wide geographical scope of the trade between Maynila and communities outside the archipelago saw its residents exchanging products with Chinese, Arab and Indian merchants. As revealed by archaeological findings in the Santa Ana district of Manila, a vibrant community existed in the area from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. One of the most important findings in this archaeological site was the presence of over 1,000 pieces of China-made blue-and-white pottery, thus far, the earliest known porcelain made in this style during the Song Dynasty. Historians have since labelled this historic community as the Kingdom of Namayan.

Manila in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

Precolonial Manila was deeply embedded in the maritime commercial routes that connected Southeast Asian cities prior to European dominance in the region. By the fifteenth century, one hundred years before Ferdinand Magellan's arrival in the Philippine archipelago, ships from Luzon were engaged in a trade network in insular Southeast Asia within a triangular zone whose corners were Manila, Timor and Malacca. Such vibrant exchanges continued into the sixteenth century, making Maynila a cosmopolitan settlement.

Pre-Hispanic society

The politics of Maynila also confirmed its cosmopolitan character. At the time of Spain's arrival in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it was under the leadership of two chiefs: Rajah Matanda (an elder statesman and the grandson of Sultan Bulkeiah of Brunei) and his nephew, Rajah Sulayman. By the mid-fifteenth century, Maynila's relations with Brunei grew stronger, and by the sixteenth century, it was on its way to become a Muslim port-state and the largest trade hub in the archipelago.

Maynila's safe harbour and its strategic position as a centre of intraregional commercial exchange, bridging inland communities in Luzon and merchants from overseas, influenced its multicultural character. China, for one, was a crucial trade partner at various times of the year. The majority of Chinese merchants arrived in trading junks from Fujian province. The Philippine local communities held their pottery and kitchenware in high esteem. These products would then be bartered for forest products, such as plant medicines, honey and beeswax, which came from upland peoples.

However, due to the restrictions of the Ming state on trade, private traders of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities were the ones who carried out most of the economic exchanges that took place in the South China Sea. Enhanced political relations also deepened these commercial links: Maynila sent tribute missions to the Chinese capital in 1405 and 1410, albeit it would eventually lose contact after about 1430. This last point is corroborated by historian William Henry Scott's observation that there is an absence of datable archaeological pieces from downtown Manila excavations earlier than the reign of the Ming emperor Hongzhi (1487–1505), a fact that also suggests that Rajah Sulayman's city was a relatively late settlement.

Demography was another indicator of the vibrancy of Maynila and its environs. According to European eyewitness accounts, the area was densely settled by Tagalog-speaking peoples, although their estimates varied. One complication in this regard is the definition of precolonial Manila; aside from Maynila, there were other communities in the area surrounding Manila Bay, with Tondo being the most notable. Tondo, just north of Maynila in a site just across the Pasig River, was also heavily populated. The combined populations of Maynila, Tondo and nearby settlements probably numbered around 43,000 in 1570, which would pale in comparison to contemporary Southeast Asian cities but was significantly high relative to other Philippine communities.

Pre-Hispanic architecture

Vernacular architecture consisted mainly of native huts (*bahay kubo*), which were constructed using indigenous botanical materials, such as wood, bamboo and nipa. According to Antonio de Morga, an official of the colonial state in the late sixteenth century, local people often constructed their *bahay kubo* in a similar fashion, almost always as single-detached units along coasts and other waterways, creating settlements near plots of land where they grew rice, palm trees and nipa groves. These houses were typically built on stakes so that the main structure was placed high above the ground. The space between the main structure and the ground served as pens for livestock, which were fenced in with stakes and bamboo, as well as an area where they could pound and clean *palay* (un-milled rice). One could enter the house through a bamboo ladder that could be pulled up when the household was not expecting any visitors. Their rooms were small and had low roofs, which were made of timber, bamboo and palm leaves. The houses also had open verandas that were often used for domestic chores.

One can also reconstruct the architectural history of pre-Hispanic Manila by studying local terms related to housing and physical structures. While *bahay* was the general term for house, locals used *lapat* to refer to a house made of mortised timber, and *dalam* for the much larger dwellings of chieftains, which could accommodate the chief's extended family, slaves and guests. There was also a word for an occupied but uncompleted house, *abolog*, suggesting that the construction of a *dalam* probably took a long time to build.

The chieftain's house also had a kind of lounge called *palapag* or *gulanggulang*, which lay under their houses, where people could engage in discussions and gossip. There are other housing-related words listed in early-colonial Spanish-Tagalog dictionaries. There are terms for rooms built under a house (*gilir*), a pigpen (*banlat*), small dwellings in fields in the countryside (*balongbalong*, *sagobang*), huts built in the mountains (*habong*, *dangpa*, *kobo*), and temporary shelters for spending the night on the road or in the hills (*kohala*, *landay*). The general term for granary is *banglin*, although there are specific words for those that are constructed as separate buildings (*tambobong*, *olobo*) and for those inside other structures (*amatong*, *talongtong*). The dictionaries also reveal that precolonial Tagalog communities were already adept at techniques involving carpentry and metal-working.

Local people also built forts called *kota*. In Manila, Sulayman built his *kota* at the mouth of the Pasig River, along its southern bank, as it flowed into Manila Bay. It was constructed using palm tree logs and earthworks. The palisade had wide gaps that allowed for the projection of 10–12 artillery pieces, which were native culverins (*lantaka*). According to reports, Sulayman's residence was spacious enough to accommodate ammunitions and other weapons. Unfortunately for the local population, their fortifications and artillery could not prevent the Spanish conquest of their city in 1571 under the leadership of Miguel López de Legazpi, the first governor-general of the Spanish colony of Las Islas Filipinas.

The early Spanish colonial period (1571–1600s)

After two failed attempts at building the colonial capital in Cebu and Panay in the Visayas from 1565 to 1570, Legazpi decided to try his luck with the northern island of Luzon, the existence of which he learned from the Visayans. The communities of Maynila, Tondo and Macabebe of present-day Pampanga province resisted his plans, but the Spaniards emerged victorious. It was during this episode that native fortifications encountered Spanish weaponry and artillery.

With this victory, Legazpi renamed the settlement Manila on 3 June 1571. Henceforth, Manila, which the colonisers designated as a Spanish city (*ciudad*), stood as the Philippine capital and remained so throughout the colonial period. Legazpi's decision hinged on the city's strategic location, which was defined by its sizeable and arable hinterland and access to a natural harbour. Under his rule, and those of succeeding governors-general, Manila would grow into a city whose physical attributes were a mix of European and native characteristics.

Changes in Manila's morphology

Manila's transformation must be understood in the context of how the Spanish monarchy envisioned the foundation of colonial towns throughout the empire based on a specific template. In 1573, King Philip II ordered the standardization of the physical appearance of these settlements.

Legazpi and his successors implemented a physical layout similar to the plaza-centric system of perpendicular streets set forth in Philip II's decree. Historian Robert Reed clarifies, however, that the layout of Manila was not a direct result of the 1573 ordinance as there is no evidence proving that the metropole actually gave Legazpi a clear set of guidelines for planning the layout of the colonial capital.

One should also note that the alteration of the built environment in Manila and other Philippine communities went hand in hand with what became known as the *reducción* system. As part of the intertwined projects of colonialism and Christian evangelization, and with the friars at the forefront, the *reducción* consolidated the local communities into permanent and accessible settlements, many of which had previously depended on swidden agriculture, which was a huge factor why many people lived in dispersed and temporary abodes in the mountainous interior. To implement the *reducción*, the colonisers created *pueblos* (towns) using a distinct spatial pattern, the so-called plaza complex. In this altered socio-spatial arrangement, the colonisers began to call the Christianized local people *indios*.

Legazpi and his successors quickly set out in transforming Manila accordingly. Streets were laid out in gridiron fashion, and squares were allocated for socio-civic spaces, including public buildings and churches. Although these changes thoroughly transformed the erstwhile *barangay*, crucial aspects continued to link the pre-Hispanic settlement with the Spanish capital, one of which was seen in how Legazpi took over the strategic space that Sulayman's defences had previously occupied.

Due to the presence of Spain's European rivals in areas surrounding the Philippine archipelago, defence became an important factor in Manila's early development. One of the first serious threats to the city's stability was Lin Feng (or Limahong), a Chinese corsair who engaged in piracy on the coasts of Guangdong and Fujian. Upon learning of Manila's weak defences, Limahong brought his men to the city, arriving in the early morning of 30 November 1574. They caught the Spaniards by surprise and breached their defences. However, the Spaniards put up a fight and drove away the Chinese. The pirates launched a second assault on 2 December, but it proved to be a costly disaster for Limahong's party. Nevertheless, this encounter highlighted the pressing need for defensive structures to protect Manila.

Aside from pirate attacks, another crucial threat to Manila's security was the frequency and ferocity of fires. One such huge incident occurred in February 1583 during the funeral services for the deceased Gov.-Gen. Ronquillo de Peñalosa. As a result of these fires, an increasing number of Spaniards shifted to stone as the preferred material for construction, especially during the administration of Gov.-Gen. Santiago de Vera (1584–1590), with Jesuit priest Antonio Sedeño preparing and executing the plans. Vera forbade the use of light materials in the construction of houses and ordered the use of stone, roof-tiles and bricks. Indios, who were made to work in the quarries, made this shift possible.

Meanwhile, Sedeño's knowledge of masonry helped rebuild the city, turning it from a settlement of houses built of wood and thatch to a city of stone and tile-roofed buildings. One of the most important components of this technological innovation was the raw material 'adobe'. Known locally as Guadalupe stone, adobe was consolidated water-laid volcanic tuff that was abundant in the central regions of Luzon Island. The town of San Pedro Macati, which was accessible to Manila via the Pasig River, was an important source of this material. The first adobe structure in the city, following the 1583 fire, was the episcopal residence of Domingo de Salazar, Manila's first bishop. Sedeño himself prepared the plan for this structure.

The frequency of earthquakes in Manila, however, posed a problem for these stone structures, leading to the emergence of a hybrid form of architecture, which was not purely Hispanic but a mixture of different sources of architectural knowledge. Initially, Spanish settlers tried to construct houses that were built entirely of stone, replicating their Iberian practices. However, the strong tremors that the city endured in the seventeenth century, notably in 1645, forced the colonisers to rethink their plans. They eventually realised the wisdom of native builders who used heavy wooden roof work supported on wooden pillars that swayed during an earthquake. However, houses also needed stone to substantially diminish the chances of fires.

City residents thus developed a type of structure that addressed the two natural hazards through a fusion of two building styles – native and Spanish. This hybridity, which the colonisers themselves acknowledged, gave birth to a so-called mestizo architecture (*arquitectura mestiza*). Its emergence began a new chapter in Manila's architectural history.

During the term of Gov.-Gen. Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (1590–1593), Vera's successor, the Spaniards began to construct a wall along the pentagonal perimeter of Manila that enclosed an area of 67 hectares (Figure 1). Dasmariñas was able to raise funds for this enormous project through taxes. Work began in 1591 and was almost completed by the end of his term. His son, Luis Gómez Dasmariñas, continued and completed this work in 1594. Similar to the earliest stone structures of Manila, the city walls were made of Guadalupe stone. The thick and towering walls, which were 4.5 km long, maintained racial segregation in the city between the colonisers and the colonised.

The Spaniards gave the capital a plaza-centric layout with well-arranged gridiron streets and public squares (plazas). Plazas were essentially public squares that gave the city breathing spaces, a key element in the Laws of the Indies. The main plaza was Plaza Mayor (Grand Plaza), which is now called Plaza Roma. Since the seventeenth century, the plaza was framed by significant structures, such as the Manila Cathedral, the Ayuntamiento, and the Palacio del Gobernador. Manila's morphology came to reflect the ideal urban form of the Spanish.

Figure 1 The pentagonal perimeter of the walled city of Manila, 1851**

Courtesy of the American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University.*

Source: M. Buzeta and Felipe Bravo, *Diccionario geografico, estadistico, historico, de las Islas Filipinas*. Madrid, Imp. de J.C. de la Pena, 1851.

As a geographical designation, Manila specifically referred to the walled-in area as Intramuros or 'inside the walls', a definition that lasted from the late sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century. One of the most important features of the walled city was its fort, Fort Santiago. Initially, Legazpi built a wooden fort on the site of Sulayman's palisade in 1571. Two decades later, Gov.-Gen. Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas replaced the fort with one made of adobe. In the years that followed, Fort Santiago would become a significant military and political landmark in the city. It was not just a defensive structure but also a prison complex where those branded as enemies of the state were tortured and imprisoned, including the foremost nationalist, José Rizal, in 1896. It also had barracks for military personnel. A moat was built to separate the fort from the rest of the walled city.

At the other end of the walled city, opposite Fort Santiago and overlooking the suburb (*arrabal)* of Ermita, was a round stone tower, which was fitted with culverins. Its layout was composed of three concentric circles, with the innermost ring containing a cistern, while the outermost ring boasted a diameter of 32 m and a thickness of 3 m. This tower, named Nuestra Señora de Guía and built by Sedeño in 1584–1590, was eventually enclosed by the Baluarte de San Diego, which had the shape of an ace of spades.

The governors-general in the seventeenth century continued to improve the defence of Intramuros through additional architectural innovations. They did so by raising thick curtain stone walls, creating bastions at intervals, and protecting the different gates of the walled city with the aid of ravelins (*revellín*), which were protruding triangular fortifications. These additions gave Intramuros a polygonal footprint, thereby increasing its resistance to artillery attack. Moreover, moats were also dug around the city to further improve its defences.

By the eighteenth century, the walls totally enclosed Manila from its suburbs (*arrabales*) or Extramuros. In the early colonial period, these *arrabales* were home to around 20,000 indios who performed domestic and manual labour for the Spaniards living in Intramuros as well as the Chinese in their designated area of residence in Parian. These communities are presently already part of the city of Manila: Binondo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, Ermita, and so on. The walls were of course penetrable as the colonisers within Intramuros depended on the services rendered by the local population and the Chinese living outside.

Outside Manila, the Extramuros area was not just for non-European settlements, its *arrabales* sustained the economic, political and religious activities in Intramuros by providing the walled city with the necessary raw materials and labour. The most populated *arrabal* was Tondo, located north of the Pasig River. Other *arrabales* on this side of the Pasig included San Nicolas, Santa Cruz, Sampaloc, San Miguel, Quiapo and Binondo. Three *arrabales* occupied the other side of the river: Paco, Ermita and Malate. As the walled city was separated from the important districts on the northern bank of the Pasig River, the bridges (*puentes*) that spanned the river became crucial elements of the capital's built environment. The most important of these bridges was the Puente Grande de España (Great Bridge of Spain), which connected the walled city and Binondo's Plaza de San Gabriel (later renamed Plaza del Padre Moraga), which was constructed in the 1630s, making it the first bridge to span the Pasig River.

Moreover, a significant community of Chinese (almost all males) resided in the Parian, a de facto ghetto just outside the eastern walls of Intramuros. Due to the social importance of the Chinese and their proximity to the walled city, the Parian became a prominent feature of Manila's built environment. It must be noted, however, that the Parian was rebuilt and relocated several times within the city limits following its establishment in 1581. Spanish authorities eventually allowed Chinese residents who converted to Catholicism, many of whom married indigenous women, to reside outside the Parian. Under the Dominicans, the Catholic Chinese, and eventually their Chinese-mestizo descendants, built a community in the *arrabal* of Binondo in 1594.

Manila as the colonial centre

As a capital, Manila was the colonial nerve centre for political, religious and economic affairs. It was the location of the governor-general's palace, the residence of the colony's sole archbishop, and site of the head churches of the major religious orders that proselytized in the colony, namely, the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits and Recollects (French: Récollets), as well as the main port of the transpacific Manila galleon trade. Its undisputed position as the foremost city in the colony made it Southeast Asia's first primate city.

The Real Palacio, often called the Palacio del Gobernador (Governor's Palace), was the official residence of the governor-general, the highest colonial official, and stood at the southwest corner of Plaza Mayor. The original palace was located near Fort Santiago. However, when it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1645, Gov.-Gen. Diego Fajardo (1644–1653) moved its location to somewhere near the main plaza of Intramuros. On this site rose a two-storey palace, whose construction period spanned from 1733 to 1850.

Another important structure that conveyed secular political power was the Ayuntamiento, originally called the Casas Consistoriales, which stood at the east side of Plaza Mayor. Home of the Cabildo (city council), its original structure was built in 1607 but it was severely damaged by earthquakes, leading the government to demolish it in favour of a two-storey stone structure. Given the deeply Catholic nature of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, it is not surprising that sacred structures dominated Manila's landscape. Moreover, one must keep in mind that the Catholic hierarchy, led mainly by the first five missionary orders that arrived in the colony (the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Recollects), were also in charge of many social services and institutions, such as healthcare and the education system. Hence, the physical spaces devoted to these vital needs also exhibited religious attributes.

The highest religious official in the colony was the archbishop of Manila, whose head church was the Manila Cathedral. Like the Palacio del Gobernador, the Manila Cathedral also stood adjacent to the Plaza Mayor. When it was first built in 1581, it was made of nipa (palms) and bamboo. However, when a fire burned down the structure two years later, it was rebuilt in 1603 using wood and stone. However, a strong earthquake in 1645 eventually destroyed it. Thus, a third iteration was built in 1659. Like the cathedral, the San Agustin Church was initially built of light materials when it was first constructed. As such, it fell victim to several incidents of fire in 1574, 1583 and 1586. Finally, in 1587, it was reconstructed using adobe. Other important religious structures inside Intramuros were the San Ignacio Church and the Santo Domingo Church, whose ecclesiastical complex included a convent, a patio and a cemetery. As the religious orders were also in charge of the educational system in the colony, these churches often adjoined the schools and colleges managed by these congregations, such as the Colegio Seminario de Santo Tomas (established in 1611 and presently the University of Santo Tomas) and the Colegio Maximo de San Ignacio (established in 1596).

Convents were another important set of religious structures that defined the built environment of early colonial Manila. All five missionary orders established their respective convents in Manila and – in the case of the Franciscans and Dominicans – they also built hospitals as they also offered medical treatment and pharmaceutical services. The Dominicans in fact built a hospital next to their convent specifically for the Parian Chinese.

Architecture in the *arrabales* developed alongside Manila as it grew in the early colonial period. Binondo was one of the most notable *arrabales* in this regard. By 1596, it already had a church and a convent, serving as the nucleus of the Christian community composed of both *indios* and Chinese. In 1606, the church was rebuilt in stone and was 38 *brazas* long, more than 8 *brazas* wide and 8 *brazas* high (a *braza* is 1.67 m). Fray Diego de Aduarte described it in 1640 as spacious, well-lit, sturdy and visually pleasing. Its 50 large windows heightened its aesthetic qualities. Another prominent *arrabal* in the early colonial period was Tondo. By 1611, a convent was built in this suburb, and the church-convent complex was completed in around 1625. The Tondo Church was dedicated to the child Jesus, the Santo Niño. Unfortunately, Gov.-Gen. Manrique de Lara ordered its demolition in 1661 because he feared that the Chinese warrior Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong), who at the time threatened to invade the islands, would use its stone walls as a defence structure.

Manila galleons

Like Batavia, Melaka and other colonial cities in the region, Manila was an entrepôt linked to smaller trading posts, acting as a beachhead for Europeans to profit from pre-existing trade routes that flowed through it. This specific type of urbanization was the consequence of what some scholars have described as 'pin-prick colonialism'. Rather than create an extensive colonial apparatus, as in colonial Latin America, Spain intensified its economic control over a specific colonial centre, that is, Manila. While provinces languished due to state neglect, Manila grew as a crucial hub for the transpacific Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, which began in 1565 and facilitated the lucrative silk-for-silver exchange between the Chinese and Mexico-based Europeans, laying the foundation for a world economy.

The impact of the galleon trade on Manila cannot be overstated. From the 1570s to the 1590s, the output of silver from the mines in Latin America skyrocketed, the bulk of which made its way to Asia via the galleons. From 1616 to 1620, the value of this trade was more than 600,000 pesos annually. This annual amount did not go below 500,000 pesos until 1645.

The rise of the galleon trade, however, did not spell the end of Manila's extensive commercial connections with the rest of Asia. European dominance over the city created huge changes, but it also gave birth to a new mode of multilayered relations based on negotiations, or what historian Birgit Tremml-Warner calls the 'Manila system'. The Manila system was a complex network involving Ming China, Azuchi-Momoyama (and later Tokugawa) in Japan, and the Spanish Empire.

This triangular market connected Manila with Asian ports, such as Quanzhou and Nagasaki, as well as with Spanish towns on the Pacific side of Mexico.

Colonial economic structures did not heavily alter the subsistence of the *indios*, largely preserving the pre-Hispanic political ascendancy and the privileges of *barangay* chieftains (henceforth regarded as *cabezas de barangay*, or heads of barangays). More accurately, the Tagalog communities were integrated into Spanish affairs as they were responsible for sustaining Manila with its needs, especially food items, thereby developing and maintaining cross-cultural relations.

The Chinese, also called Sangleys in the colonial Philippines, were a significant set of actors in these complex cross-cultural relations that bound the economic interests of the different ethnic groups in Manila. The relations between the Spaniards and the Chinese proved to be problematic, oftentimes a product of contradiction between stated policy and actual practice. One such example was Vera's initial opposition to trade with China, only for him to become a great supporter of this commercial link after 1587. Clearly, the Manila galleons did not sever the pre-existing commercial ties between Manila and China; they even amplified these ties. China began to license junks in 1567 so as to trade legally in the southern seas. By 1588, an average of 16 junks sailed to the Philippine capital on an annual basis, the most important factor in sustaining the city's wealth.

Manila Chinese in the early Spanish colonial period

The success of the Manila galleon as a trading system led to a massive influx of Chinese migrants, of which the majority came from Fujian to the capital throughout the early colonial period. In 1570, there were only around 40 married Chinese in the city. Less than two decades later, this number would increase to 4,000. By 1600, it had reached 15,000. Two decades later, 21,000 licensed Chinese residents were registered in Manila, excluding those who were unlicensed, about 5,000 people. In 1639, a massive and gruesome Chinese insurrection occurred in which around 23,000 Sangleys were killed. The Chinese population typically fluctuated in line with economic prospects and the periodic outbreaks of violence and suppression directed towards them, although in peak years the Chinese population reached 30,000.

Social significance of the Manila Chinese

The significance of the Chinese went beyond simple demography. In the economic sphere, they became a visible group owing to their presence in a huge number of industries. Although they were (and still are) stereotyped as retail shopkeepers, many were trained and excelled in skilled trades in Manila and the *arrabales*. They were employed as artisans in practically every industry that existed in the city: tailoring, shoemaking, weaving, baking, gardening and silversmithing.

The Parian became the epicentre of not just the Chinese community but also economic activity in Manila. It was a self-sufficient space that had developed in such a way that the areas surrounding it became dependent on its outputs for their day-to-day survival. However, this only deepened the relationship of dependency, compounded by their growing population, which also negatively affected the Chinese. The fortifications of Intramuros and the existence of the Parian were testament to the fear shown by the Spanish towards the Chinese population in Manila. At the same time, these very structures revealed the irony behind their complicated relationship: the Spaniards viewed the Chinese as a threat to the colony's security and yet its very survival relied on the valuable labour provided by the Chinese. Occasionally, this animosity exploded into violent episodes in the form of massacres and rebellions, leaving Manila's physical infrastructure in ruins, not to mention the lives lost. Ironically, when it was time to reconstruct the city, it was often the Sangleys who performed the necessary work, such as when 1,500 Sangleys were asked in 1605 to rebuild the destroyed walls of Manila in the aftermath of the Chinese rebellion of 1603.

Building colonial Manila, in both the literal and figurative sense, owed a huge deal to the Chinese who produced the key raw materials, such as wood, tiles and bricks, and transported them to the capital. They not only controlled the entire construction supply system, but they also developed ingenious techniques of working with these materials. The Chinese were also notable for their skills, such as carpentry, masonry, ironworking, painting and sculpting, which were crucial in the development and upkeep of the city's built environment. Even the religious orders and officials – people who were critical decision-makers behind the construction of both secular and sacred structures in the colony – acknowledged their valuable contribution to the city. Like the *indios*, the Chinese were also extremely knowledgeable about the sources of lumber in the archipelago. This situation led to instances of knowledge exchange between Asians and Europeans in the development of Philippine architecture.

The fact that Chinese were often involved in construction work in Manila was a result of the factors that influenced the migration flows between the Philippines and the Middle Kingdom during this period. Prior to Emperor Wanli's death in 1620, the political situation in China was deteriorating. One of its manifestations was the substantial drop in the number of construction works in China. A considerable number of stonemasons and carpenters were unable to find work in cities such as those in Fujian, where demographic pressure forced them to seek employment elsewhere such as in the Philippines. Upon arriving in the islands, Chinese workers could offer their labour at low rates. It was thus not surprising that the Spanish often turned to Chinese labour for their construction-related needs. They were skilled masons, bricklayers, and tile and lime manufacturers. They were also capable of obtaining lime from the abundant white corals and shells on the shores of Manila Bay. Of the 774 enumerated Parian residents in May 1689, 17 were carpenters. Simply put, a full account of Manila's architectural history during the early Spanish colonial period would not be complete without analysing the contributions made by the Chinese.

Colonial architecture and the Chinese

Pedro Luengo is arguably the most notable historian in recent years to have studied the significant contribution of the Chinese in the development of architecture in early colonial Manila. Luengo's scholarship focuses on a particular period of substantial cultural exchange between Asia and the West when Spain and Portugal were united under a single monarchy: the Iberian Union (1580–1645). He asserts that during this period, the colonisers employed indigenous knowledge in building the fortifications for Spanish Manila and Portuguese Macau, as seen in certain Chinese architectural traditions visible in such fortifications, leading to interesting cases of hybridity and a sort of technical dialogue among these cultures. These defence structures are often regarded as Western creations, yet Luengo reveals that their design is more in line with Chinese innovations. Luengo analyses one such example in his article 'Forts in between: the defense of Manila and Macao during the Iberian Union'. He refers to the Nuestra Señora de Guía, whose circular structure is preserved inside the Baluarte de San Diego, which was uncovered, identified and initially studied by Esperanza Gatbonton in a study published in 1985.

This circular structure was already an outdated solution in the seventeenth century and was criticized at the time of its construction for being conceptually archaic. The Spanish probably used the open space in the inner part of the structure as a storehouse (*almacén*). A second ring occupying a higher position had openings that were in the form of arrow holes, which were likely not European casemates but instead much similar to contemporary Chinese innovations, referred to as Cáng bīng dòng (藏兵洞), examples of which can still be seen in cities like Jingzhou in Hubei Province and Ganzhou in Jiangxi Province. These are low gunnery galleries that played a significant role in armed conflicts in early seventeenth-century China, as such, Chinese builders were likely knowledgeable of these architectural features. Nevertheless, the tower of Nuestra Señora de Guía was, "neither a Cáng bīng dòng nor a torre almenara but a hybrid solution closer to Asian models". Perhaps, because of this, colonial officials did not value the tower built in Manila. Instead, it was appreciated by the Chinese community, especially after the 1603 Sangley Rebellion.

Luengo also adds the following in his analysis of how the Chinese were able to influence Spanish fortifications in early colonial Manila: "By itself, a technical similarity would not support Chinese participation in the works, but in 1645, a Chinese carpenter named Si Ben was asked to demolish a "cube" and an alleyway. It seems obvious that the so-called cube, which Spanish authorities could not precisely identify, was a wooden defensive element. The easiest explanation is that it was a structure that followed Ming patterns. Much more intriguing is the contract between the Spanish administration and Chinese cloth merchant Jan Co to build sentry boxes. These buildings were usually made in stone by Europeans; while natives preferred local materials like bamboo or nipa. Contracting this task to a Chinese connects it with continental methods. It is probable that the Spanish authorities were trying to construct a Báilù wū (白露屋, literally, a white dew hut), a small domed structure usually built using bamboo or willow.

Although cloth or cotton blankets were not uncommon in Chinese fortifications, these sentry boxes were usually made of bamboo." Based on these examples, Luengo concludes that, "the fortification of early Intramuros was essentially a Chinese proposal, albeit one that included some European novelties especially in geometrical design, built by native, Spanish, and Chinese workers. The city became a valuable stronghold for the Spanish, mixing European novelties and Chinese tradition."

Another crucial element behind the significance of the Chinese in the construction industry was the relatively cheap labour they offered. According to Bishop Salazar, the Spaniards could afford to build sturdy but inexpensive stone structures because of the Sangleys. This was true not just for personal dwellings but also for institutional buildings like churches, monasteries and hospitals, as well as the city's own fortifications. The contributions of the Chinese in the decorative features and fixtures that adorned the early colonial churches is also noteworthy. For instance, Chinese artisans were highly prized for their ability to create religious art. Along with native artists, many Chinese were also noted sculptors, painters and artisans whose works enmeshed them in global commercial networks. In sum, the extensive role played by the Sangleys in colonial Manila was a testament to their integral role in the construction and maintenance of European-controlled cities in Asia during the early colonial period.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, the layout and buildings that were built during the early colonial period transformed Manila into a Hispanic city. However, it would be a grave mistake to envision it as a city that was totally dominated by Spanish traditions and aesthetics. One should also consider the major contributions made by the Chinese and the indigenous populations in the development of a uniquely Manileño architecture. At its core, the built environment of Manila was a global endeavour. Its economic foundations were built on transpacific trade that involved ports and products across multiple continents. The technology and labour that produced the city's structures were multi-ethnic in origin. Furthermore, these developments in Manila had ramifications that impacted the urban development of communities outside the colony. One should also note how the silver trade, conducted by Manila galleons, was directed towards China, which proved critical to the commercial expansion and urbanization of the late Ming period.

A common misconception about Spanish-era architecture was that the colonisers imposed their aesthetics on the Filipinos, who – at that time – had no pre-existing building tradition to which they could turn. In reality, however, a unidirectional flow of ideas was impossible owing to the inapplicability of Spanish architectural concepts in a tropical environment that was prone to geophysical and man-made hazards, such as earthquakes and fires. Consequently, Spanish methods and aesthetics were unsuitable in the colony and early colonial urban planning had no choice but to adapt to these conditions.

Neither purely indigenous nor thoroughly Hispanized, Filipino architecture was an amalgam of various influences coming from multiple continents that strengthened the pre-existing building tradition.

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Chapter 4

Silk Routes in Java

Religious Diversity and Cultural Corridors

By Wiendu Nuryanti

The historical development of a religion, faith, culture and tradition cannot be separated from the context in which it developed. This chapter examines the notable impact of the Silk Roads on northern Java in Indonesia where merchants came to settle, bringing with them their culture, religion and way of life, and leaving behind artefacts and architecture, and their influence on the urban space. The spread of Buddhism is a good example of how cultural diffusion occurred in Java, and where Buddhism eventually became a major religion. The earliest inscriptions from maritime South-East Asia reveal the presence of Buddhist merchants from the fifth century.

Lasem in northern Java is an outstanding example of religious and ethnic tolerance in a maritime trading city that was also part of the Silk Roads. The heritage of Muslim missionaries, who came with Gujarat traders, meant that northern Java became a pathway for Islam to spread throughout Indonesia. Lasem is a best-case example of how the Silk Roads had an impact beyond that of trade, as it also functioned as a cultural corridor for different religions over the centuries. Tangible heritage in Lasem can be seen today in the form of artefacts, architecture and urban spaces, while intangible cultural heritage is manifested through traditions, ceremonies, arts, festivals, gastronomy and textiles.

Religious diversity in Java

In many ways, religion is the main source of tradition and cultural expression throughout the world. This fact especially applies in Indonesia which, in many ways, is unique in the world for its physical, cultural and religious diversity. As the world's largest archipelago, it is important to improve our understanding and appreciation of the diversity of religions in Indonesia and their implications for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

There are some 17,000 islands in Indonesia, of which Java is the most fertile and densely populated and where 55 per cent of the total population of Indonesia resides. Although 89 per cent of its population adheres to Islam, Indonesia is officially a secular country whose constitution recognizes the five major world religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism and Christianity. At the age of 18, all Indonesian citizens must designate one of these faiths for their national identity document (KTP). Within this government framework, Protestantism and Catholicism are officially labelled as separate religions within Christianity. In recent times, the national government also grouped Chinese religious practices under 'Buddhism', while local animist religious traditions are officially classified as a form of Hinduism.

This tolerance is even more noteworthy when we consider that the overwhelming majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim. Although Hinduism and Buddhism were the first of the world religions to arrive in Indonesia, it is Islam that has come to predominate throughout most of the Indonesian archipelago today. With over 270 million people, Indonesia has the biggest Muslim population in the world and is the fourth most populous nation.

In terms of religious exchanges and influences on architecture and built heritage throughout the centuries, it is therefore not surprising that Islam plays an important role. Indonesia remains endlessly intriguing for religious scholars because of the 'melting pot' nature of the country. It is noteworthy that all these major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam – are tolerated in the country and have followers who continue to live there. During the fight for Independence, Sukarno, the Founding Father and first president of independent Indonesia (1945–1965), tried to go beyond ethnic identity by embracing the concept of 'Pancasila' as a unifying philosophy to include, "all human beings who, according to geopolitics ordained by God Almighty, live throughout the entire archipelago of Indonesia from the northern tip of Sumatra to Papua."

Since 1945 (when independence from Dutch colonial rule was declared), Indonesians have strived over the decades to not only tolerate these differences but also to celebrate them in order to unify the nation. The national motto after all is 'Bhineka Tunggal Ika' (Unity in Diversity). Christian Bataks, Hindu Balinese and Muslim Javanese co-exist with relative ease; intermarriage (even across faiths) is common enough to be unremarkable. Their collective influence on the blended national culture, both intangible and tangible cultural heritage or architecture, can thus be discerned.

However, the secret behind this harmony is not because of a genetic or cultural predisposition of the inhabitants, but rather thanks to a key element of a decades-long government policy. President Suharto's New Order regime (1965–1998), for example, was fond of using references to the *Ramayana*, the Hindu epic, and the tradition of Javanese wayang shadow puppetry.

This unexpected blend of animist and Muslim rituals is typical of traditional Indonesian Islam. Outside researchers have noted that there are perhaps 20 times more Muslims in Java than in Saudi Arabia, but scrape away the thin soil of Javanese Islam, and you will find the cultural bedrock of the preceding millennia of Hinduism, Buddhism and animism, alive and well. Although the vast majority of Javanese are officially registered as Muslims, most practice a tolerant, syncretic creed that neither evangelizes nor excludes others.

Silk Roads in Indonesia as a cultural corridor

For centuries, the Silk Roads existed as a network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe. The Silk Roads are often thought of as a single road from the Middle East to China. However, in reality, the Silk Roads comprised several routes. The main route ran from East to West, from East Asia to the Middle East, with other parts of the Silk Roads connecting India, Southeast Asia and East Africa. When people came to trade, they often settled, bringing with them their culture, religion and their way of life into the new environment. Their architecture influenced the urban space, and they left artefacts. For example, gemstones from Java were traded via the maritime trade networks up the coast of Indonesia and into mainland Southeast Asia or India. From there, these gemstones found their way to China, or even as far as Europe.

The spread of Buddhism is a good example of how cultural diffusion took place in Java. Buddhism began in India and was introduced to China and Southeast Asia through travellers and merchants along the Silk Roads. They exchanged religious books and spread their ideas, and Buddhism eventually became a major religion in Java. The earliest inscriptions from maritime Southeast Asia indicate the presence of Buddhist merchants from the fifth century. Buddhists in Java and Sumatra were in contact with Buddhist centres in India until the twelfth century, and a network of Buddhist monasteries encouraged the movement of monks. Buddhist teachers from India and China visited Sriwijaya in South Sumatra and Java. Conversely, rulers of the Sriwijaya kingdom in Sumatra sponsored monastic communities in India.

In the early Indonesian kingdoms, Buddhism and Hinduism were practised alongside each other. They shared the Sanskrit language and held a common view of the world and the nature of spiritual power and religious life. Reliefs on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Borobudur Temple in Central Java depict Brahmans worshipping a Buddhist stupa, and Prince Sudhana seeking instruction from Lord Siva.

Buddhist and Sivaite communities alike lived on lands endowed by royal charter, with some associated with the shrines of royal ancestors. In the East Javanese court of Majapahit (fourteenth century), the religious superintendents of the Buddhists and the Sivaites had equal status as senior ministers.

Another example of harmonious religious exchanges can be seen in shared pilgrimage sites such as in Sendangsono, a small village in Central Java famed as a Christian shrine. In addition to Catholics, the place is also popular with Buddhist monks (*bhikku*) because of its cool temperatures and pleasant atmosphere. There is a local legend that the place was also a dwelling for the goddess Dewi Lantamsari and her only son, Den Bagus Samidja. Hence, the site has roots in Hinduism, Buddhism as well as Catholicism and, once again, reveals Indonesia's syncretic religious roots and belief systems. Worshippers of all three religions come here to pray.

Islamic and Chinese influences in Java

Evidence of the early spread of Islam throughout Java is provided by early gravestones from Aceh, which is located on the northern tip of Sumatra on the trade routes from the Malaysian peninsula. The oldest gravestone marks the death of Sultan Sulaiman bin Abdullah bin al-Basir in 1211 CE, thus confirming that an Islamic community had been founded in the early thirteenth century. Other gravestones document the presence of Islamic societies or, at least, the presence of Indonesian Muslims in the fourteenth century on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula and in East Java at the site of the great Hindu Javanese court of the Majapahit Empire. Around 1,400 CE, the famous Malay entrepôt state of Melaka was founded in the Malay Peninsula. Within a few decades, it had become a Muslim state and was likely a promoter of Islamization throughout the Malay-Indonesian region.

Since the Islamization of Indonesia occurred over a long period of time, during which Indonesia was a major crossroads of international trade, it is probable that Muslims from many parts of the Islamic world played a role in the spread of Islam. There is also strong evidence that, in some parts of Indonesia, Islam was spread by Muslims from other parts of the Indonesian Archipelago which had already embraced Islam.

The Chinese influence from the Silk Roads trade can also be found. Maritime trade was developed by junk ships navigating the sea routes from ports in the southern part of China to the Indonesian Archipelago. The voyage required a long stopover every year as the departure for the next leg of the journey depended entirely on the annual monsoon winds. This led to early settlements of Chinese merchants in several port towns along the northern coast of Java.

Cross-cultural communication between Chinese merchants and local people took place in those cities. The ability of Chinese merchants to communicate, negotiate and work with people from other cultures was vital to their international business at the time.

Descendants of these inter-ethnic marriages formed what is termed the Tionghoa Peranakan community. They combined Chinese and Indonesian cultures in their everyday life. As an example of this cultural hybridity, Tionghoa Peranakan women wore a *kebaya* (a traditional upper garment) and *encim* batik (Chinese-Indonesian motifs) or Chinese batik, whereas the men wore *tuikhim* shirts and baggy pants. *Encim* batik was produced by Tionghoa Peranakan entrepreneurs in several cities on the north coast of Java, such as in Indramayu, Cirebon, Pekalongan and Lasem. Aside from its use for domestic purposes, batik was also exported to places outside Java, such as Sumatra, Malaysia, Singapore and Phuket.

Lasem as a model of a Javanese city of religious tolerance

Lasem in northern Java is an outstanding example of religious and ethnic tolerance of a trading city that was also part of the Silk Roads. Lasem was one of a series of urban centres along the northern coast of Java that was involved in maritime trade over the centuries. Java was the key entry point into Indonesia for traders thanks to its location, size, population and opportunities in places such as Batavia (now Jakarta), the most important harbour, and Semarang, the second most important harbour and maritime centre, as well as Lasem, Kudus and others.

The heritage of Muslim missionaries, who came with Gujarat traders over the centuries, can be found wherever they settled locally, and while they waited six months every year for the monsoons to blow in the opposite direction to bring their sailing vessels home. Some Muslims even inter-married with local women. The northern coastal area was thus the pathway for Islam to enter Indonesia, leading it to become the dominant faith over the centuries.

Through its architecture, built heritage and intangible cultural heritage, Lasem demonstrates the blending of cultures and religions. As the area maps of Lasem show, different religions predominated and influenced the evolution of the urban structures over the centuries. Some examples of the blended styles still found in Lasem today can be seen in the Islamic student city, which has the oldest girls' boarding school in the world (Al Hidayat Islamic Boarding School, built in 1918). Lasem has a mosque that holds the Praba Crown, an example of the largest Hindu-Buddhist tradition in Indonesia. It also has the most complete physical legacy of Sunan Bonang, a venerated Muslim teacher of that era, which holds many traces of physical and intangible cultural heritage of Majapahit culture as well as references to trade, especially to the voyages of the legendary Chinese admiral, Zheng He (for a map of his itinerary, please see the Introduction to Part III).

Lasem has a sub-district that has the largest Chinatown housing complex in Southeast Asia. It is also interesting to note that Lasem is the city where trade in batik first began in a meaningful way, probably due to the availability of the fabrics brought by Chinese traders to Java. The local artisans then transformed them into batik designs using the lost wax technique.

The most famous batik enterprise during this time was Rumah Batik, established by the legendary Mme Kiok in the 1700s. The batik houses in contemporary Lasem can be found in the Batik Quarter (Kampung Batik) and were set up during the post-Independence era. Batik, of course, is not simply a decorative fabric or a fashion choice, it is an essential element in the Javanese cycle of life. Batik motifs, patterns and quality change at each major milestone in life, such as births, engagements, marriages, funerals, as well as other major occasions, like graduations or business launches.

Lastly, Lasem is a city of culture with a unique batik motif and colours, known as Batik Tiga Negeri (Batik of Three Countries), as a result of the acculturation of various cultures. This is another example of how intangible cultural heritage (the batik) and tangible cultural heritage (artefacts, architecture and the urban space) are intertwined within community life. It is therefore important to acknowledge and identify this cross-cutting layer before attempting to preserve and revitalize cultural heritage.

Layers of religious influence and city morphology

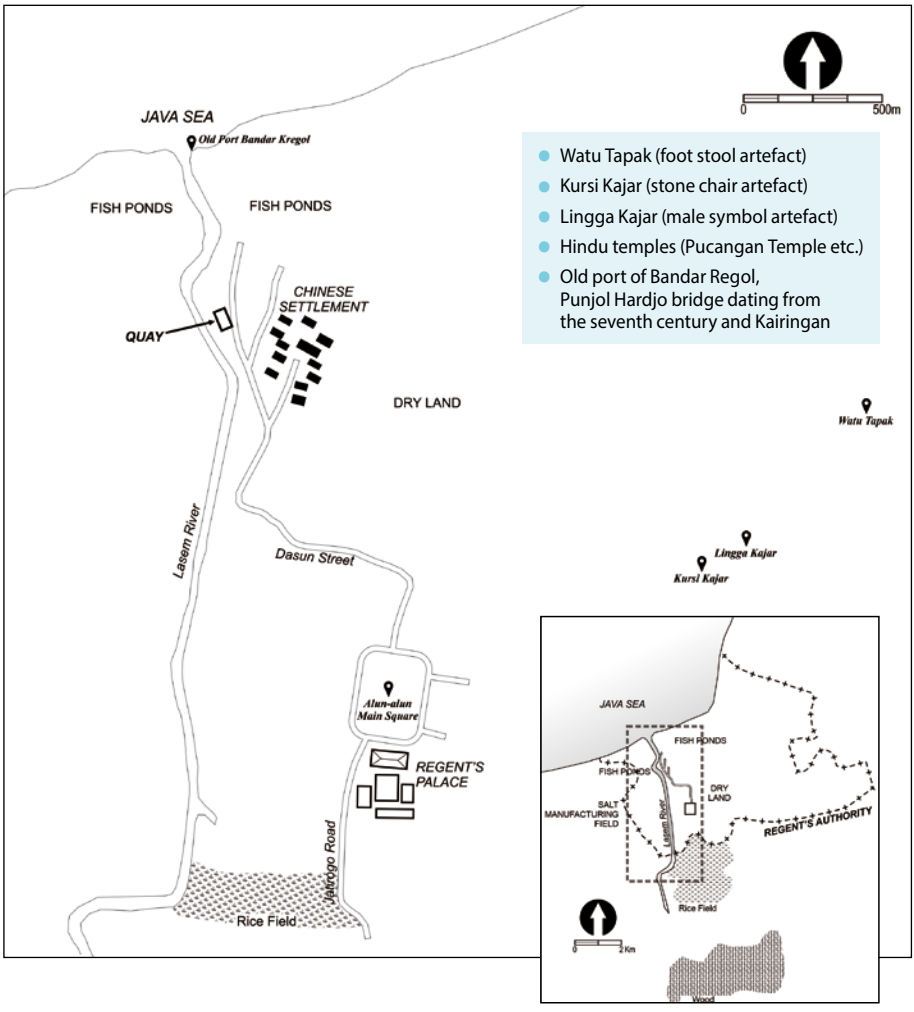
The accompanying maps of Lasem exemplify the blended style of architecture and the city's morphology, which are the results of layers of religious influences that have intertwined over the centuries, with elements of each previous era still existing in subsequent decades and centuries. Each era has left both tangible and intangible cultural heritage that can still be identified in Lasem today in the form of artefacts, architecture and the urban space. These layers span the centuries and are presented below.

Hindu influences from the Majapahit kingdom circa 1513

Hindu influences can be found in both tangible and intangible traditions and artefacts that still survive in everyday life in Lasem, and despite the fact that the majority of the population today is Muslim. The remains of built heritage of the Hindu era can still be found in various condition in the numerous small Hindu temples throughout Lasem, such as the Pucangan Temple and the Samodrawela Temple, among others. Some of the artefacts, such as Watu Tapak, Kursi Kajar and Lingga Kajar, can still be clearly seen (Figure 1). Even in the Jami Mosque (the biggest mosque in Lasem) there is a very old small temple in front of the mosque that is believed to date from the Hindu era, thus underlining the tolerance and diversity in Lasem that has been a part of the Javanese syncretic belief system for a long time (Figure 1).

Also dating from this Hindu era is the old port of Bandar Regol, which linked trade with Lasem to Southeast Asia and supported an important shipbuilding tradition (Figure 2). This was facilitated by the extensive teak forests found near Lasem and the coastal trade within a wider region linked to the Silk Roads. The old port of Regol found in Lasem is the oldest port found in Java, where the Silk Roads first encountered the island of Java and continued to establish not only trade links but cultural links throughout the region. In terms of construction forms, there remains a distinctive red brick architecture from the Majapahit era.

Figure 1 Hindu heritage, circa 1513**

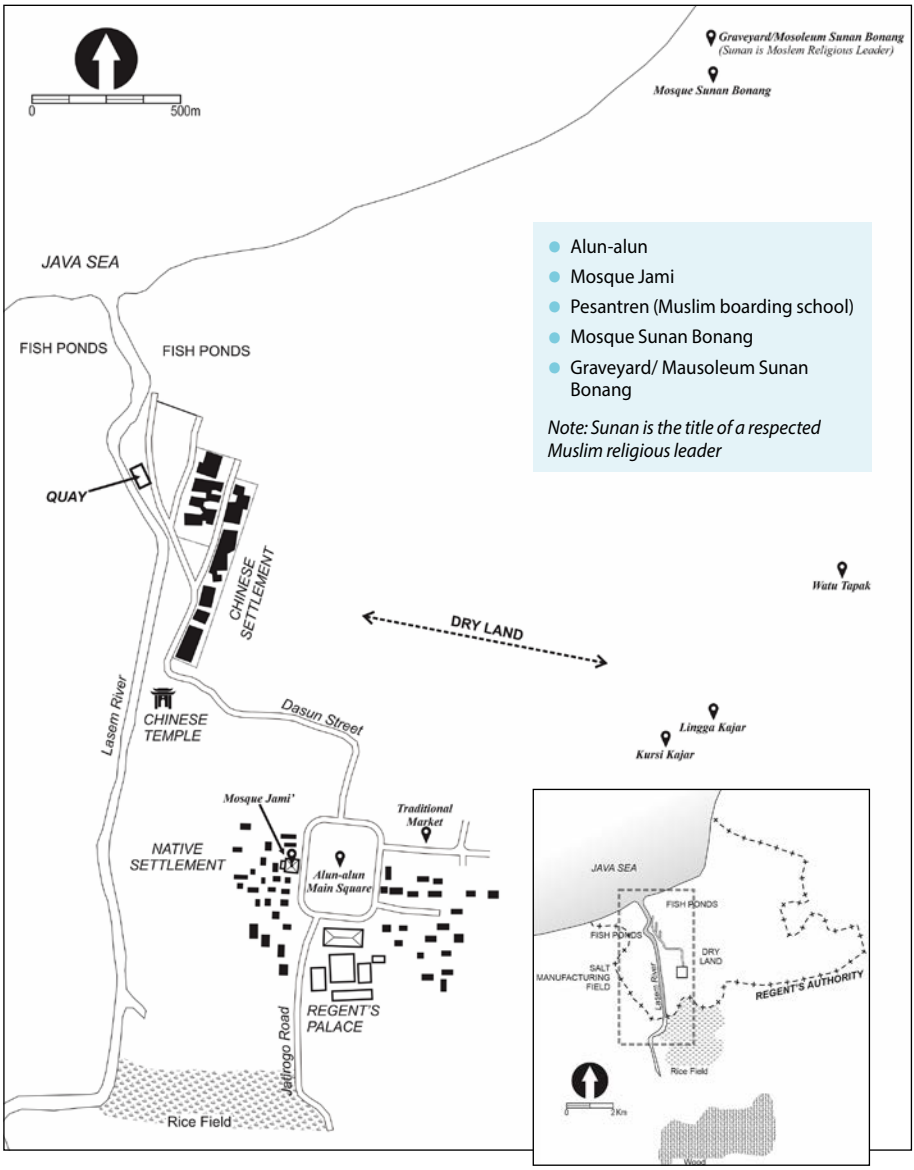


Plan © Wiendu Nuryanti.

Muslim influences dating from 1588

Muslim influences can be seen in the public squares (*alun-alun*) that are characteristic of the old traditional Javanese town structure at the centre of Javanese towns (Figure 2). There is also the Sunan Bonang mosque named after a venerated Muslim teacher of that era, as well as graveyards, mausoleums and, of course, other mosques, reflecting a mixture of Javanese and Arabic style. High walls separating the different *kampongs* (a traditional village) were also a feature of the time and can still be seen today.

Figure 2 Muslim Heritage 1588**



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Chinese and Muslim combined influences from 1740

Chinese and Muslim influences merged in the north coast of Java with Malaysian trade areas and China's Silk Roads, proof of which can still be found in the many shipwrecks discovered in the waters along the coast. This Chinese link culminated in the fourteenth century with the fabled voyages of Admiral Zheng He, whose extensive fleet passed through this region, leaving traces behind. Chinese temples or *klenteng*, of which the oldest Chinese temple in Java is called Ciu An Kong (Figure 3), are still intact. They are characterized by bright red and pink colours enriched by ornaments and accessories, with statues of lions at the main gate as a symbol of welcome, guarding against dragons, among other influences, in an iconic Chinese style.

Figure 3 Cu An Kong, the oldest Chinese temple (klenteng) in Java

© Wiendu Nuryanti.

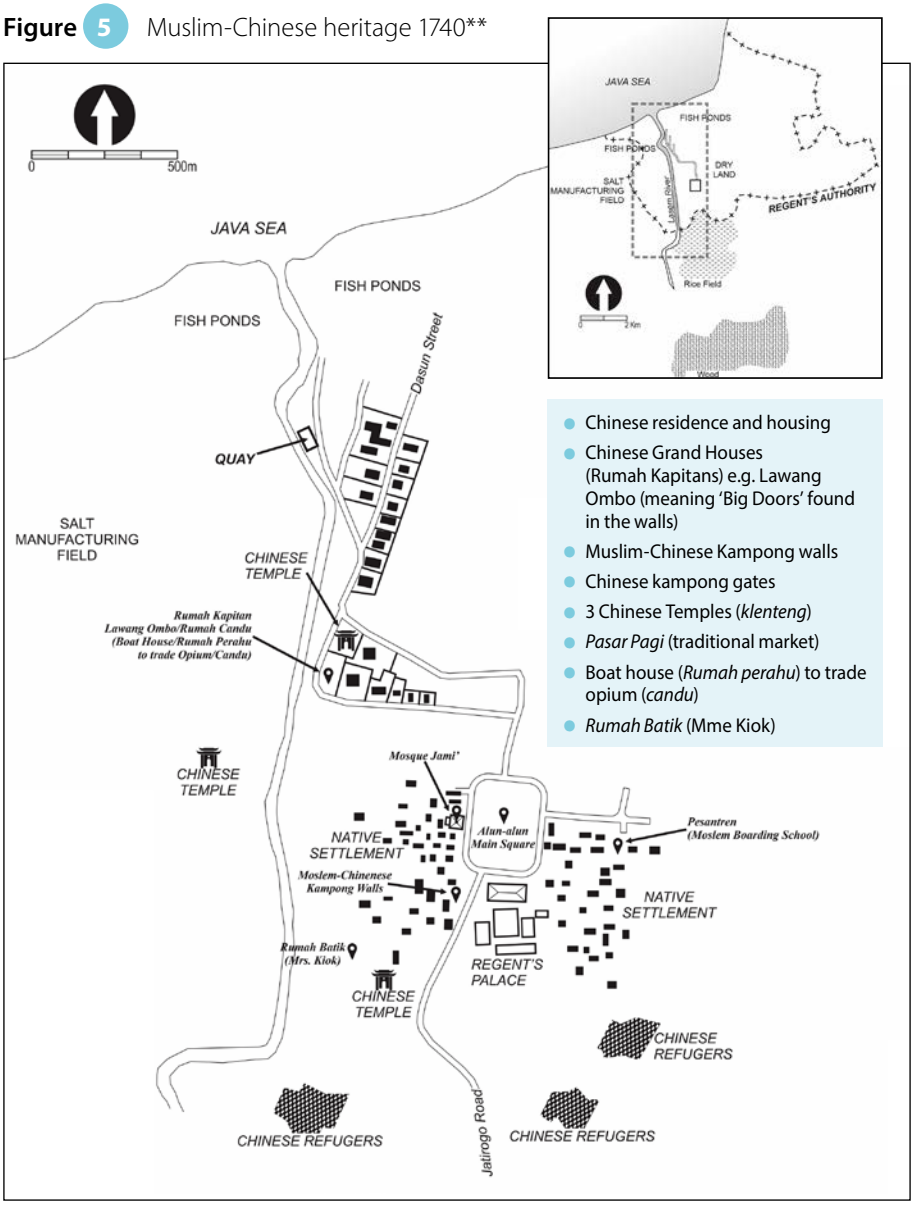
These temples are especially reflected in the Chinese settlements, typically found alongside roads for commercial purpose, as well as the Grand Capitan houses of the most notable traders, some of which have been repurposed in contemporary Lasem as hotels and restaurants. The oldest and best known of these Capitan houses, called Lawang Ombo (Wide Door House), are characterized by wide doors, veranda architecture and pointed roofs (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Lawang Ombo, one of the Capitan houses in Lasem

© Wiendu Nuryanti.

Lastly, there are other mosques showing Chinese-Muslim influences. Chinese traders also brought textiles at that time, which would later be made into batik using many Chinese-Muslim motifs. The era also saw the importation of *candu*, a form of opium, which was stored in special houses designed with a boat motif that alerted people to the availability of this forbidden drug. In modern times, these *candu* houses have become listed heritage sites (Rumah perahu). Prigeaud (1983) has called Lasem, "the most complete and largest Chinese town in Indonesia" when referring to its architectural components. Chinese temples, called *klenteng*, were also built parallel to the mosques and are still in use today (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Muslim-Chinese heritage 1740**



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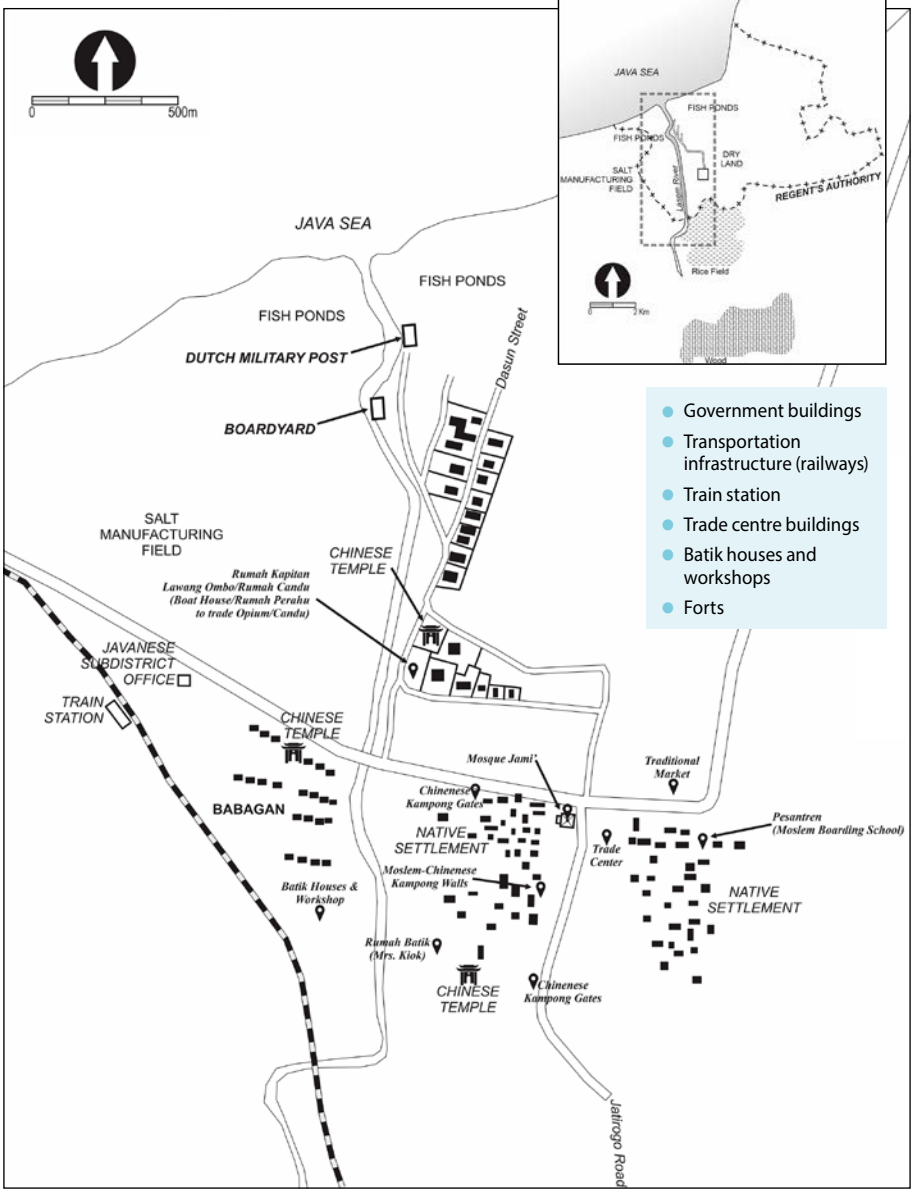
Colonial influence from 1745–1945

This period covered 200 years of Dutch colonial rule, as reflected in the extensive physical infrastructure of the many government buildings, housing complexes, the harbour, port and railway station. There was also an important trade centre which coordinated trade, including with China and the rest of Asia. The colonial heritage of this era can be seen today in the small forts (*benteng*) and in the architecture of the train station (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Colonial Dutch heritage**



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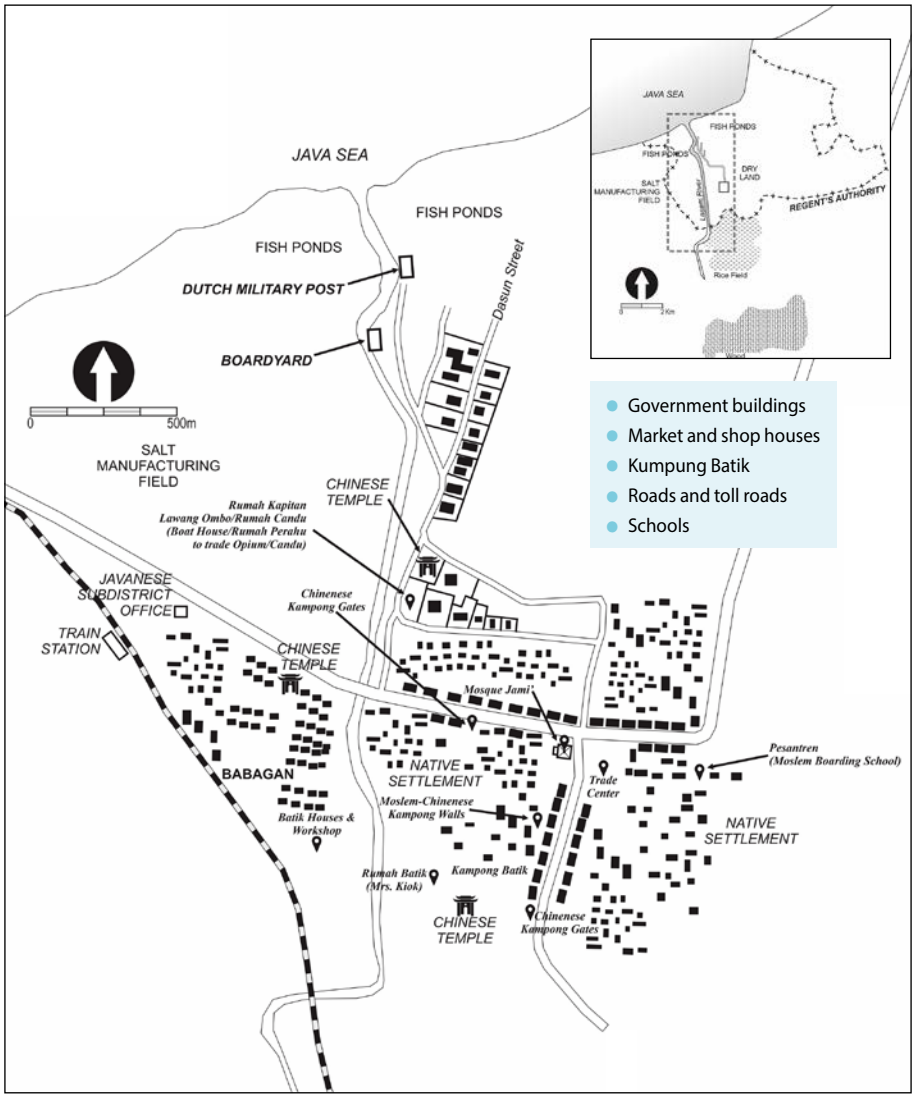
Above all, there is Deandels Road, named after a famous Dutch governor, which divided the main square into two, and is still important today. The old city was dominated by colonial architecture for housing and offices for Dutch officials. The Dutch also set up a ship-building centre to support the shipping trade in Lasem, which has been an important trading centre for centuries (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Independence heritage post-1945**



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Independence (post-1945) and the contemporary era

The contemporary era is reflected in the 'New Lasem' with its new government offices, schools, hospitals, markets, and the Batik Quarter (Kampung Batik). The mosque was revitalized in 2020 and renovated from the Arabic style dome into a more Javanese style with a pointed roof and a wooden structure (Figure 8). Previously, the open space (*alun-alun*) would not have been visible, as it would have been covered by market stalls. The restoration has been carried out to reflect the very hierarchal Javanese city structure, with the *alun-alun* as the people's space. This important hierarchy symbolically demonstrates that people have the highest power (Figures 9 and 10). The *alun-alun* in contemporary Lasem (Figure 11) is used as a space for cultural festivals, national holidays and weekend fairs, a mix of Chinese-inspired lion dances, Muslim festivals and other religious festivals, thereby reflecting its contemporary use, and now with pedestrian walkways where, previously, only cars had access.

Figure 8 Lasem main square (alun-alun) with the modified mosque from the Arabic style dome to a Javanese pointed roof

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Figure 9 Pedestrian alleys have now become open spaces for different religious festivals, art and cultural activities

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Figure 10 When the main square becomes a cultural space showcasing the city's high religious tolerance

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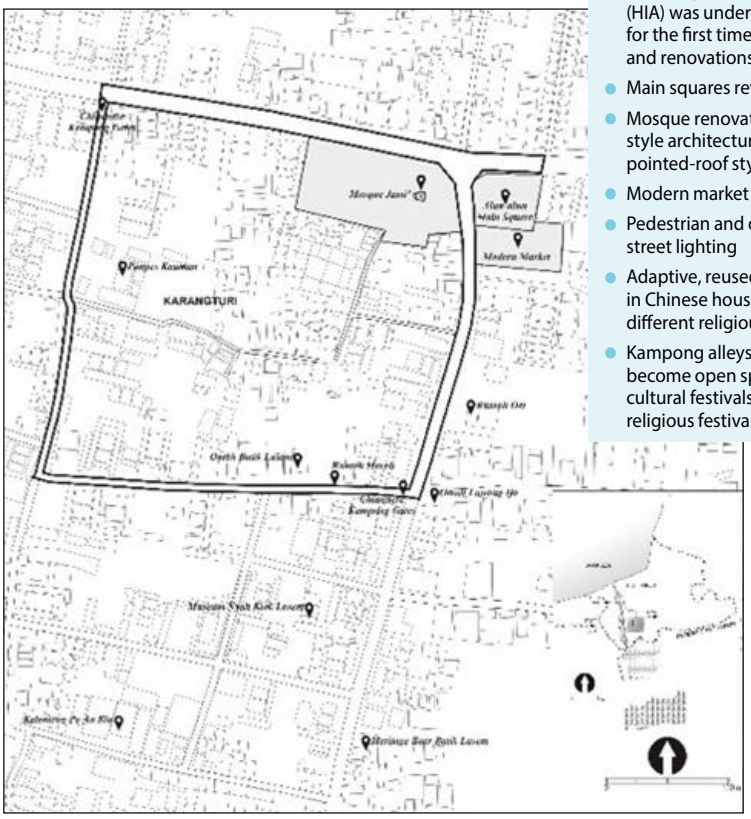
Figure 11 Contemporary Lasem in 2020**



Plan © Wiendu Nuryanti.

- A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was undertaken in Indonesia for the first time before planning and renovations took place
- Main squares revitalized
- Mosque renovated from Arabic style architecture to a Javanese pointed-roof style
- Modern market and shops
- Pedestrian and open spaces with street lighting
- Adaptive, reused spaces both in Chinese houses and in the different religious facilities
- Kampong alleys and streets have become open spaces for art and cultural festivals, and different religious festivals

Conclusion

Lasem is a best case example showing how the Silk Roads had had an impact beyond trade and had also functioned as a cultural corridor. The merchants left behind traces of their religions and cultures in the form of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Tangible heritage can be seen in the form of artefacts, architecture and urban spaces, while intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, ceremonies, arts, festivals, gastronomy and textiles. The two forms of culture are inextricably linked, yet research often focuses on just one aspect.

Within this context, elements of intangible cultural heritage found today in the northern Java trading city of Lasem include the Chinese barongsay (lion dances) batik motifs, as well as fashion influences seen in Silk Roads textiles. Hindu influences can be seen in the many ceremonial elements still practised today in everyday life as part of the prevalent Javanese syncretic experience. The colonial era has left, along with its government buildings, many gastronomic influences in local dishes and restaurants. The Muslim traditions, including the daily call to prayer, are a common feature. The post-Independence period provided a Batik Quarter, whose outputs and motifs are now well-known throughout Indonesia.

The figures in this chapter show the existence of layers of religious diversity and exchanges, resulting in cultural influences built up over centuries, and demonstrating how the concept of tolerance as a living heritage in Lasem is both practical and idealistic.

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Section II

THE INDIAN OCEAN

Thence we travelled to the town of Qāliqūṭ [Calicut], which is one of the chief ports in Mulaibār. It is visited by men from China, Jāwa, Ceylon, the Maldives, al-Yaman (Yemen) and Fārs (Persia), and in it gather merchants from all quarters. Its harbour is one of the largest in the world. In this town too lives the famous shipowner Mithqāl, who possesses vast wealth and many ships for his trade with India, China, al-Yaman, and Fārs.

Ibn Battuta

The Travels of Ibn Battuta, 1325–1354

Towards the Indian Ocean unto an island called Kish'. It is a six days journey to reach this island. The inhabitants neither sow nor reap. The merchants who come from India and the islands encamp there with their wares. Moreover, men from Shinar, El-Yemen and Persia bring thither all sorts of silk, purple and flax, cotton, hemp, worked wool, wheat, barley, millet, rye, and all sorts of food, and lentils of every description, and they trade with one another, whilst the men from India bring great quantities.

Benjamin of Tudela

The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, 1173

Chapter 5

The Port City of Colombo

A Journey to the Capital of Sri Lanka

By Gamini Wijesuriya

Colombo is the current commercial and administrative capital of Sri Lanka. It is the country's largest city and one of the biggest metropolises in South Asia. An integral part of Colombo is its sizeable port, one of the most prominent in the region and of significant historical importance as a trade hub. The long history and scale of urbanism and architecture that the city exhibits to the present day can be attributed to the dialogue and exchange of ideas and values that occurred along the Maritime Silk Routes. The story of the city is intertwined with the story of its port, hence the title of this chapter.

The port city of Colombo grew from an Indigenous settlement and became a seaport for Arab traders from the seventh century. It was initially frequented by sailors travelling along the Silk Roads, and it later attracted the main European maritime traders, firstly the Portuguese in 1505, followed by the Dutch in 1656, who made it the capital of the provinces they governed, and finally the British in 1796. The British took over the sovereignty of the entire country and made Colombo its capital in 1815. British rule lasted until 1948, when Sri Lanka declared its independence, but Colombo has remained its capital. Colombo is a unique manifestation of the exchanges and dialogues that took place along the Maritime Silk Routes, particularly in relation to its urbanism and architecture, with two millennia of highly advanced town planning and architectural traditions in Sri Lanka contrasting with the introduction of European norms.

Introduction

Colombo is the last in the line of many administrative capitals (Figure 1) that have been recorded in Sri Lanka since the sixth century BCE. There is ample written and monumental evidence for these capitals. Indeed, three ancient cities (Anuradhapura, Kandy and Polonnaruwa) have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is recorded in the chronicles that the country's rulers, in consultation with astrologers, planned and built the city of Anuradhapura in the fifth century BCE. This is an extensive and sophisticated monastic city (Figure 2) that functioned as the capital of the country until the eleventh century CE. Monastic cities are characterized by the central position of the walled citadel, surrounded by several clusters of Buddhist monasteries. Buddhist monasteries dominate the architectural landscape of capital cities by their scale and complexity, whereas citadel and royal buildings remain relatively simple. The pressure of constant foreign invasions, among other reasons, compelled the capital to move initially from its original location in Anuradhapura to seven other locations, the last of which was Kandy in the centre of the country. All the post-Anuradhapura cities functioned as a capital for relatively short periods, although attempts were made in each to follow the town planning principles and architecture of the first and biggest capital at Anuradhapura.

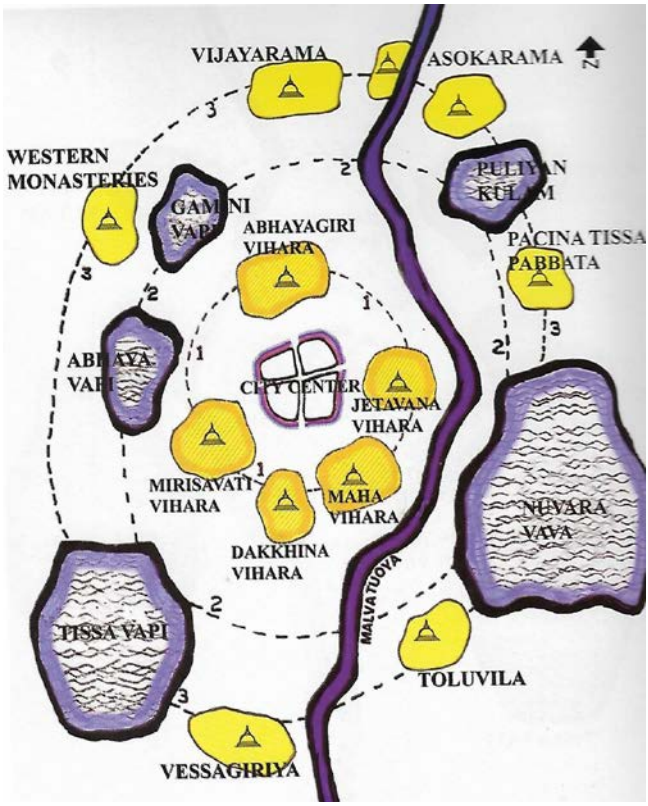
Figure 1 Capital cities of Sri Lanka with approximate timelines
Overview by Gamini Wijesuriya

Anuradhapura	6BCE-11 AD
Polonnaruva	11-13 AD
Dambadeniya	13 AD
Yapahuwa	13 AD
Kurunegala	13-14 AD
Gampola	14 AD
Kotte	14-16 AD
Kandy	16-19 AD
Colombo	19 AD to date

Table © Gamini Wijesuriya.

Sri Lanka's strategic geographical location ensured it was an important port of call along the Silk Roads for centuries. As a result, many traces have been left along its coastal belt. Colombo, on the west coast, is one such place. Originally a small seaport for Arab (Moorish) traders in the seventh century and frequented by sailors along the Silk Roads, Colombo later became attractive to European maritime traders, initially with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505, who made it their main trading station in the region. This was followed by the Dutch, who captured the city in 1656 and established it as their provincial trading capital. The British subsequently took possession of the city from the Dutch in 1796 and – after initially making Colombo their provincial maritime trade centre – they finally made it the capital of the entire country after they attained the country's sovereignty in 1815. The city has since retained its capital status in post-colonial Sri Lanka, which gained independence in 1948.

Figure 2 City plan of ancient Anuradhapura, after Roland Silva**



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Sri Lanka's strategic geographical location ensured it was an important port of call along the Silk Roads for centuries. The city's planning and architecture reflect these different stages, particularly under European occupation. In the sixteenth century, land adjacent to the port was converted to a formal settlement by the Portuguese, who introduced European fortifications and town-planning norms. The Dutch refined this further and developed a well-planned city with more urban elements, such as street grid patterns and domestic and public buildings, such as churches, warehouses, the governor's house and hospitals, locating these according to the same urban plans found in cities in the Netherlands. The British made few changes initially, but then extensively expanded Colombo through planning and architecture to reflect its role as a national administrative capital city.

Under the British, the city centre expanded greatly, covering a much larger geographical area than before through the addition of necessary administrative buildings, such as the parliament and the city hall, as well as other essential structures, such as schools, hospitals and commercial buildings, including the railway line which starts from Colombo. City planning was guided by three eminent British town planners at different stages: Patrick Geddes (1921), Clifford Holiday (1940) and Patrick Abercrombie (1948).

Colombo's overall present urban plan is therefore based on the settlement patterns established by the Portuguese and the Dutch and subsequently developed by the British. Even after Sri Lanka secured independence from the British in 1948, Colombo continued to retain its position as the capital of the country. Since 1978, the Urban Development Authority (a government entity in which the author was one of the first architects to be employed), has been responsible for the planning and development of Colombo in line with government requirements and priorities. Its metropolitan population of 5.5 million, with 752,993 residents in the municipality, currently makes it Sri Lanka's largest city. Colombo's millennia-long evolution is a rich and varied story that is reflected in its architecture and urbanism, as well as in its multiplicity of religious and ethnic communities, languages, cultures, exchanges and modernity. This chapter recounts this story.

The Context

The emergence of the early port city of Colombo and its subsequent growth is an interesting testimony to the global maritime story. It reflects the connections and exchanges that took place between the different peoples and regions over a period of two millennia. The historical and geographical context of Sri Lanka, previously known as 'Ceylon', rendered it a key character in this story. Roland Silva, the former President of ICOMOS International (1990–1999), suggested three reasons why sailors were attracted to Sri Lanka: i) it was the southernmost point of mainland Asia; ii) it was almost on the equator, where navigational winds and monsoon effects changed directions; and iii) it marked the halfway point between the two great empires of Rome and China. Silva made the following conclusion:

> *Considering these geographical features, Sri Lanka was a necessary 'port of call' for anchorage, awaiting the right winds for the onward journey, across waters without land in sight, and for the collection of food, water and other supplies. Such physical necessities combined with the social obligations to human endurance of being away from homeland, no doubt, encouraged the navigators to consider Sri Lanka as a 'port-of-return' to ships calling on the island, either from the East or the West.*

Silva's theory is proved beyond doubt by the presence of numerous archaeological remains in the form of monuments and sites, thousands of artefacts (e.g. Roman coins, Chinese porcelain and Persian pottery), and written records. Furthermore, there are more than 70 place names that have been attributed to the island in both local and international literary sources and travellers' accounts. These provide further evidence of the scale of maritime activities in which Sri Lanka played a part. For example, the triple-moated port located north of Colombo, known as Manthota, refers back to about the fourth century CE, and has been described by many historians and travellers from the sixth century.

Travellers have left vivid descriptions of the situation that existed mostly in the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka. Cosmas Indicopleustes, the sixth-century Greek traveller, writes:

> *Then out in the ocean, at the distance of about five days and nights from the continent, lies Sielediba, that is Taprobanê [two names used for Sri Lanka]. This same Sielediba then, placed as one may say, in the centre of the Indies and possessing the hyacinth receives imports from all the seats of commerce (emporium) and in turn exports to them, and is thus itself a great seat of commerce (great emporium).*

Note that he refers to "all the seats of commerce (emporium)" in the region, but in relation to Sri Lanka he describes a "great emporium", which probably refers to Manthota (a busy city port in medieval times).

There are indeed many stories. Accounts such as those resulting from the six visits of the well-known Chinese traveller, Cheng Ho (1371–1435), highlight the prominence of the island as a port of call. Other tales include those told by Strabo, Onesicritus, Pliny the Elder, Cosmos Indicopleustes, Marco Polo, and Ibn Battuta, among others.

Items exported from Sri Lanka include pearls, gems, chank shells, tortoise shells, pepper, cinnamon, cloves and herbs. War elephants and even birds were also exported, while horses were imported from Persia, according to some writers. Cartographers included extensive illustrations and notes about Sri Lanka in their maps. The better-known cartographers included Ptolemy, Fra Mauro, Cyprian Sanohez and Idrisi. Ptolemy of Alexandria (100–170 CE) captured Colombo in his map of the world, indicating it as the 'cape of Jupiter'. By charting Ceylon on a proportionately large scale on his map, he undoubtedly wished to reveal its prominence in the stories recounted to him by travellers.

Foreign contact with religious interests started in the early days of Buddhism. Emperor Ashoka of India sent his son and daughter to promote Buddhism in Sri Lanka in the third century BCE. Chronicles of Sri Lanka refer to the sapling taken from the Bodhi tree under which Lord Buddha attained Buddhahood (at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bodh Gaya in India), which was then transported by Ashoka's daughter. The tree – one of the oldest recorded in the world – is considered a key attribute of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Sacred City of Anuradhapura (6 BCE–11 CE). It is one of the most sacred places of worship for Buddhists since the planting of the 'tree of enlightenment'. According to the chronicles, in the third century BCE, the king at the time ordered that the ship, which had transported the sacred Bodhi tree, be kept and displayed in a purpose-built building in the then capital – one of the earliest references to the concept of a museum.

Many Sri Lankan scholars have described the numerous religious ties that were established between Sri Lanka and countries like India, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, China and Cambodia between the third century BCE and the seventeenth century.

Such references included 'pilgrimage' as one of the key features of interaction between peoples. Cheng Ho's thirteenth-century trilingual inscription refers to offerings he intended to make on Sri Pada (Adam's Peak) during his pilgrimage. Sri Pada is a sacred mountain located in the natural World Heritage site of 'Central Highlands', a site of pilgrimage since the first century BCE. Other noteworthy pilgrims and religious personnel who visited the island and left their impressions include Fa Hien (fifth century), Hsuan-Tsang (seventh century) and I-Tsing (seventh century), all hailing from China.

Sri Lanka is credited with retaining the most orthodox form of Buddhism, which spread into Thailand in the twelfth century, but waned in popularity in Sri Lanka over a period of centuries. Continued invasions by foreign powers and the unsettled local, political and social atmosphere even caused one of the kings to convert to another religion. All of this led to a deterioration in the dominance of Buddhism, which had been the main religion since the third century BCE. According to sources, however, in the seventeenth century, Sri Lanka's ruler requested that Buddhist monks be brought from Thailand to re-establish the orders in Sri Lanka. It is recorded that the Dutch provided ships to transport these monks to Sri Lanka, enabling Buddhism to re-assert and establish itself once again through two new, leading sects of Buddhist monks, which survive to this day.

In 1344, Ibn Battuta also made a pilgrimage to Sri Pada and referred to Colombo in his account: "We then took the route for Calenbou [Colombo] one of the largest and most beautiful in the island of Serendib [Sri Lanka]." Colombo continued to be the main port for Sri Lanka.

Figure 3 Map of Kotte city**

© Gamini Wijesuriya.

At the time of developing Colombo as a colonial power base, cities that had been planned and built by local rulers existed close by, namely, Kelaniya and Kotte (the latter was the capital of Sri Lanka in the sixteenth century). Kelaniya is described in contemporary literature as a place with 'houses, bodhi-trees, grand promenades, pavilions, city walls, halls, image houses, and most beautiful gates and porticoes'. The layout of Kotte has been recorded, and some of its remains have been designated as monuments (Figure 3). The influence of these urban spaces and their features on the development of Colombo is not clear, but some types of building materials used in Kotte have been discovered in Colombo Fort.

Travellers to Sri Lanka have attributed many different names and descriptions to the city of Colombo. A Chinese visitor, Wang Dayuan, in 1330, referred to the place as Kao-lan-pu and described it as "hot, a deep low-lying land, the soil poor, rice and corn very dear and the climate hot." Ibn Battuta referred to it as Calenbou. The Portuguese used the term 'Columbo', the Dutch 'Colombo', and the seventeenth-century British prisoner, Robert Knox, who wrote a book on Sri Lanka, called it 'Columbo'. The Portuguese writer, Father Fernão de Queyroz, claims that the name Colombo is a corruption of 'Caleambe', which means 'the leaf of the mango tree' in the local Sinhala language. Robert Knox elaborated on this when he wrote:

> *On the west of the city of Colombo, so called from a tree the natives called 'Ambo' (which bears the mango fruit) growing in that place; but this never bears fruit, but only leaves, which in their language is called 'Cola', and thence they call the tree 'Col-ambo': which, the Christians in honour of Columbus turned to 'Columbo'. It is the chief city on the seacoasts, where the chief Governor had his residence.*

The Dutch even adopted a punning coat of arms for the town: a mango tree with a dove (Latin: *columba*). Another reference to the city is 'Kolontota', derived from Kalan-tota (the Kalani ferry, port, harbour) at the mouth of the Kelani River, one of the longest rivers in the country that joins the sea in close proximity to Colombo.

Evolution of the port city of Colombo

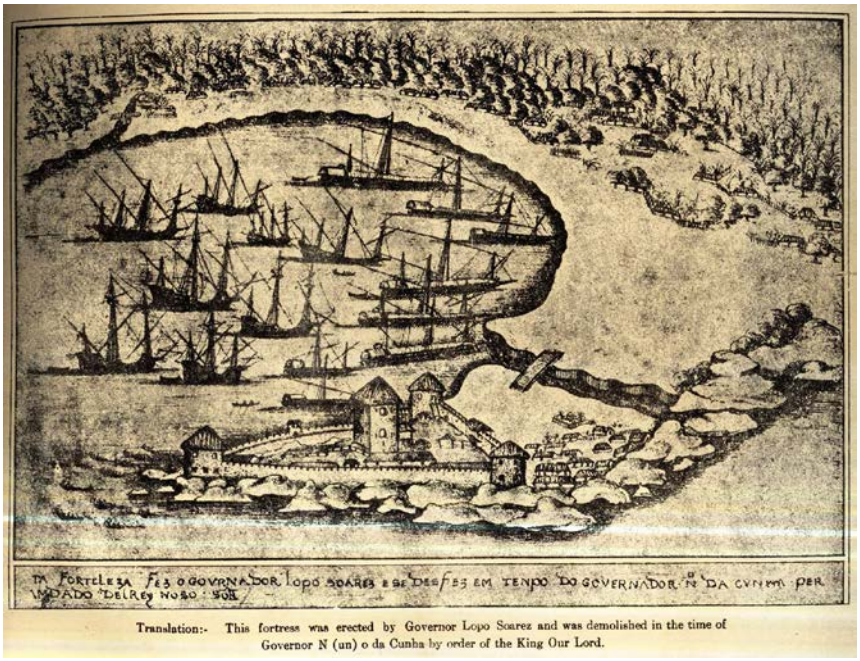
Premodern period

Local references to the birth and the growth of the early city are scant. However, in the sixteenth century, the site was the official port for the local ruler, who established his administrative capital in Kotte, just six miles from Colombo. However, as noted earlier, references to Colombo go back much further, identifying it as one of many ports of call around the island, dating back to the pre-Christian era.

Colombo is referred to as being an Arab (Moors) trade settlement in the seventh century with references to ships arriving from China, India, Persia and the Arabian peninsula. It is said that the Moors, with the permission of the local ruler, were involved in the spice trade and they apparently built stores there, followed by dwellings for the trading community in an area between the sea and the marshy land (Figure 4), thus laying the foundation for the city.

Arab traders spread their dominance, not just to Colombo but also to other well-known ports around the island, such as Galle, Jaffna, and many other places. The descendants of these Arab settlers were identified by the Portuguese as Moros (Anglicized as Moors) and some still live in Sri Lanka today. Little is known about the physical layout of this early city, as we only have later descriptions of the environment, for example, from Wang Dayuan, mentioned earlier. A few years after Wang Dayuan's account, the Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta, who visited Sri Lanka in 1344, provided his eyewitness account on the nature of the city, all of which suggest that there existed a highly developed settlement.

Figure 4 Earliest graphic representation of Colombo


Translation:- This fortress was erected by Governor Lopo Soarez and was demolished in the time of Governor N (un) o da Cunha by order of the King Our Lord.

Courtesy of the National Archives/ Land Maps and Surveys Vol. II by Brohier.

Portuguese period

The Portuguese, who had settled along the coast of India, were the first European colonizers to arrive in Colombo. Their first mission to Sri Lanka was led by Dom Lourenço de Almeida, son of the viceroy of Goa. Indeed, at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505, Colombo was a thriving place. Odoardo Barbosa, a Portuguese captain, records that when they first entered Sri Lanka, many Muslims (Moors) lived in the seaports of the island. There appears to have been an "enterprising and prosperous community of traders and middlemen who enjoyed a near-monopoly of the trade in spices, aromatic drugs, pearls, precious stones, cinnamon, ivory and elephants." The site of the old settlement was probably what is now Bankshall Street (from *bangasala*, meaning store or warehouse). Barbosa provides a description of the people:

> *[T]heir heads covered with the finest handkerchiefs; of their earrings so heavy with jewels that they hang down to their shoulders; of the upper parts of their bodies exposed, but the lower portions enveloped in silks and rich cloths, secured by an embroidered girdle. Their language was a mixture of Arabic and Tamil and their co-religionists from the Indian coast resorted constantly to Ceylon, and established themselves there as traders, attracted by the delights of the climate, and the luxury and abundance of the island, but above all by the unlimited freedom they enjoyed under its government.*

At this time in Sri Lanka, the local ruler was based in Kotte, where previous settlers were living peacefully. Local residents were dismayed by the arrival of the Portuguese, describing them as follows:

> *[T]here is in our harbour of Colombo a race of people fair of skin […]. They don jackets of iron and hats of iron; they rest not a minute in one place; they walk here and there; they eat hunks of stone [bread] and drink blood [wine]; they give two or three pieces of gold and silver for one fish or one lime; the report of their cannon is louder than thunder when it bursts upon the rock. Their cannon balls fly many gawwa [measurement of local distance] and shatter fortresses of granite.*

The Portuguese sent an emissary to the king to convey the message that they had not come to wage war. But the Moors, whose help the Portuguese sought in arranging the visit to the king, misguided the envoy, directing him instead along a route that took three days to reach the king in Kotte, which was only six miles away from the port city. The incident led to the Sinhala local proverb *parangi kotte giya wage*, which means, 'as the Portuguese went to Kotte', used to describe a short journey that takes a disproportionate amount of time to complete.

Dom Lourenço, however, managed to sign a treaty with the king, agreeing to protect the port in return for cinnamon. This agreement helped lay the foundation of the first Portuguese fort, a structure designed in line with imported European architecture and planning norms. In particular, the defensive fortified settlements, containing residences and dominant edifices, as were typical of the period, contrasted starkly with the local traditions and vernacular architecture. The Portuguese were thus the first to conceptualize a European-style fortified city centre and laid the foundation to develop Colombo into a major port city.

The earliest structures of this city centre included what is designated as the 'factory', a trading point (although its character is not clear) as well as a Catholic church dedicated to St. Laurence, the assigned patron saint. This is perhaps the first reference to church building in the country, which are also prominently portrayed in early Portuguese maps (Figure 5). However, protests from the local inhabitants against the factory led the Portuguese to demolish it in two years, but they did not abandon their intention to build a stronger fort. They secured permission to build a fort by arguing that the Moors, who were not happy with the arrival of the Portuguese, posed a threat to the king.

The Moors themselves unsuccessfully tried to convince the king that the power of the Portuguese could be a threat to local religions and people. Amid these controversies, the Portuguese started building the fort, but clashes with the local Moor community ensued, and Moorish houses were burned as the Portuguese strengthened their military power.

Figure 5 The earliest recorded Portuguese period map of Colombo**

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During this time, there were also conflicts within the local royal family as members jostled for power and the foreigners supported the claims of the different siblings, adding fuel to the fire. The Portuguese reduced the size of the fort to please the king of Kotte, but their efforts to spread Christianity created conflict with religious groups. The Portuguese exploited the instability among the ruling family and subsequently expanded the building of the fortification to guarantee the protection of the Christian community. The new fortified town comprised the land that now lies between Galle Buck and York Street, and Canal Row and the harbour. The fort wall was built using the same laterite (*kabook*, a local building material) that was used in Kotte.

The Portuguese were able to influence the royal family in crisis, and they succeeded in their goal of converting the ruler, King Dharmapala (named Don Juvan Dharmapala: 1541–1597) to Christianity. It is recorded that the king left the seat in Kotte and moved to Colombo for a brief period, making Colombo his administrative capital. He died in 1597 and was buried in a Portuguese church, marking a completely new urban burial tradition.

Captain João Ribeiro describes the city:

> *Colombo from being a small stockade of wood, grew to be a gallant city, fortified with a dozen bastions; it is true that these were six-sided after the ancient fashion, and of small size, but they were conveniently situated […]. The ramparts were a single line of tapia (walls of timber and mud), a sufficient defence against the natives, with a ditch and moat on either side ending in a lake which skirted a third of the city on the land side. Its artillery consisted of two hundred and thirty-seven pieces, of three kinds, from ten up to thirty eight pounds. It was situated on a bay capable of holding a large number of small ships, but exposed on the northern side, and its line of circumvallation stretched over one thousand three hundred paces.*

The port is also described:

> *The port of Colombo has the shape of almost a hook, for it has a spacious entrance, the middle of which is cut by a river and point that forms the barb of the hook, [it] is so sharp and so separated from the rest of the body of the land that a stone could be thrown across its breadth and being cut off by a ditch forms as it were an island having no entrance but by the ditch.*

The city was spread around the bay, which was not more than three *fathoms* in depth (a fathom equals 1.8 m). The land between the fortress and the interior was at first unoccupied and covered with trees. The Portuguese were compelled to reinforce the garrison to resist attacks by King Dharmapala, who was jockeying for power. The twentieth-century historian, Father S. G. Perera, who studied maps and accounts of the Portuguese occupation, described the city as follows:

> *[I]t consisted of two parts which the Dutch called the castle and the oudestad. These two parts were connected by a road which is now the main street. Between the road and the lake, there was a coconut grove. The western part of the city consisted of official quarters, and the mound of St Laurence which covered a good part of the city. On the summit of the hill was the monastery of the monks of St Agustene, and by its side was the gun powder magazine.*

The Portuguese did not limit their trade expansion and building of fortifications to Colombo. They extended these activities right around the island, wherever they had trading points, to facilitate the arrival and departure of ships. In total, there are records and archaeological remains of more than twenty smaller ports around Sri Lanka, including two in the hinterland. However, the Portuguese only managed to gain and retain power in the coastal areas. Many of the later forts and settlements built by the Dutch colonizers appeared on the same sites and overlaid the earlier Portuguese constructions. It is therefore hard to differentiate the architectural elements belonging to the different periods without further research.

Among the key influences left by the Portuguese was Christianity, with its church architecture and contributions to the development of domestic architecture. The Sinhalese language also absorbed many words from Portuguese. Perhaps the most notable are the names of individuals and families, such as Silva.

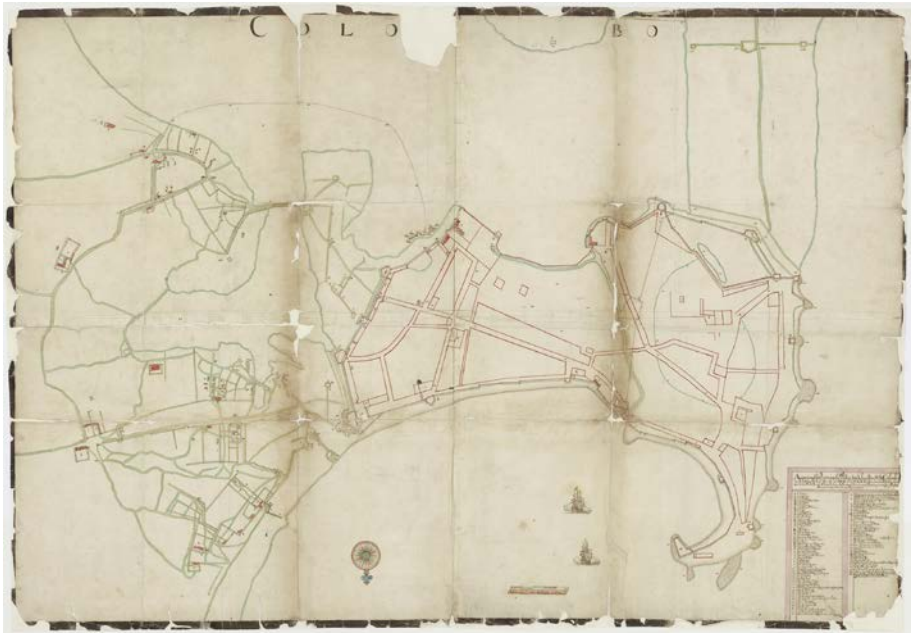
By this time, the administrative capital had moved from Kotte to Kandy, which was the native administrative capital. Fed up with the Portuguese presence, the then Kandyan king, Rajasinha II, invited the Dutch (who were seeking to capture Colombo) to expel the Portuguese. The invitation appealed to the Dutch, who wanted to eliminate Portuguese power in the maritime provinces and promote their own interests. This was finally achieved in 1656, but once the maritime provinces were under Dutch control, the Europeans retained power and did not hand the provinces back to the local ruler as he had envisaged. This behaviour disappointed the king greatly and led to the Sinhalese proverb 'giving ginger and getting paper'.

Dutch period

The United East India Company (Dutch: Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, popularly known as VOC) was created by the Dutch Government in 1602 by combining several companies which were empowered to conduct trade activities in Asia. Like the Portuguese, they were compelled to build stronger fortified settlements and did so on the existing Portuguese sites.

The urban heritage specialist, Ron van Oers, carried out a thorough analysis of the Dutch interventions on the port city of Colombo based on early maps found in the national archives in the Hague, and he then compared them with physical remains.

Figure 6 The earliest map of the Dutch period**



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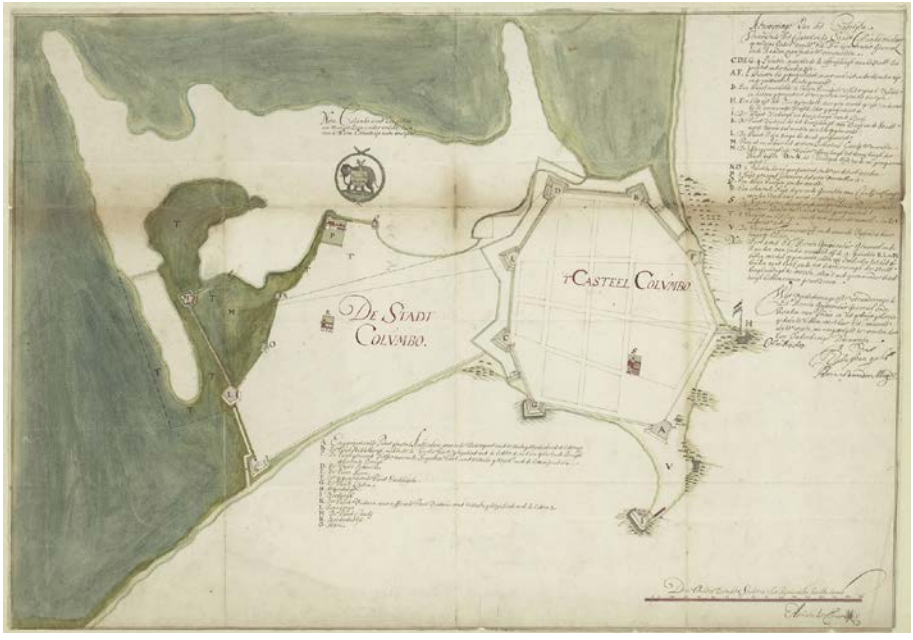
Van Oers surmised that both the Portuguese and Dutch maps, figures 9 and 10, respectively, show the same arrangement of Colombo as laid out by the Portuguese. He suggested that the early map of Colombo (Figure 6) outlined the town just before its capture by the Dutch and – although not drawn to scale – it depicted a plan with the building façades 'collapsed' flat on the ground. He believed that the map illustrated in figure 10 was more realistic and professional than the Portuguese map. He concluded that the Dutch map (Figure 6) was made by military engineer, George Schedel, and drawn by Johan Nessel, and that it more accurately depicted Colombo, just after it was captured by the Dutch.

Van Ores suspected that the Portuguese map may have been a 'spy's map' made during Portuguese rule and sent to the Dutch Republic in 1655 (one year before its capture). It was most likely drawn to provide the Dutch with the necessary information concerning the military strength of the town, its spatial configuration and internal organization. The Dutch map would have been drawn directly after the capture of Colombo by the Dutch in 1656 to help build the ruined city that had been devastated as a result of the siege and the heavy bombardments over a long period.

Figure 7 Map of Colombo during the Dutch period**



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In his analysis, Van Oers examined a third map by Adriaen de Leeuw, dated May 1659 (Figure 7), which represents a new layout of 'the Castle and City of Colombo'. According to Van Oers, this primary sketch would prove to be the guiding document, based on which Dutch Colombo would be laid out in the following years. The city centre was fortified on a smaller scale, with the development of Pettah (an urban neighbourhood) just outside the centre (Figure 12).

Figure 8 Map of Colombo during the Dutch period**

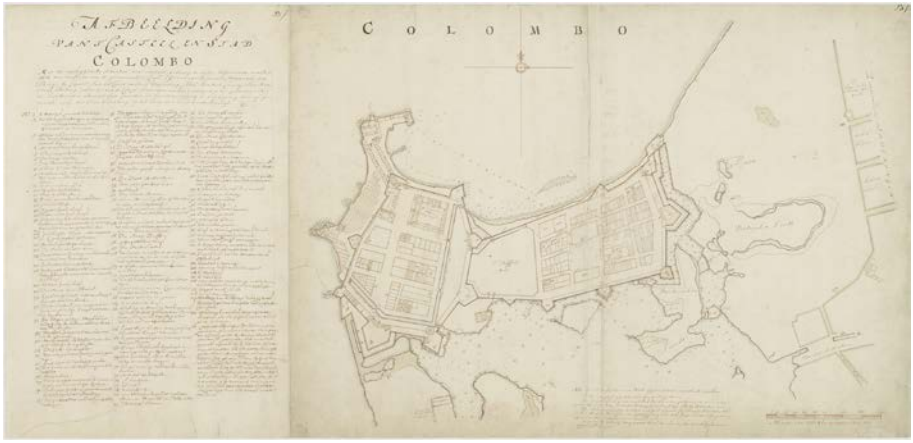

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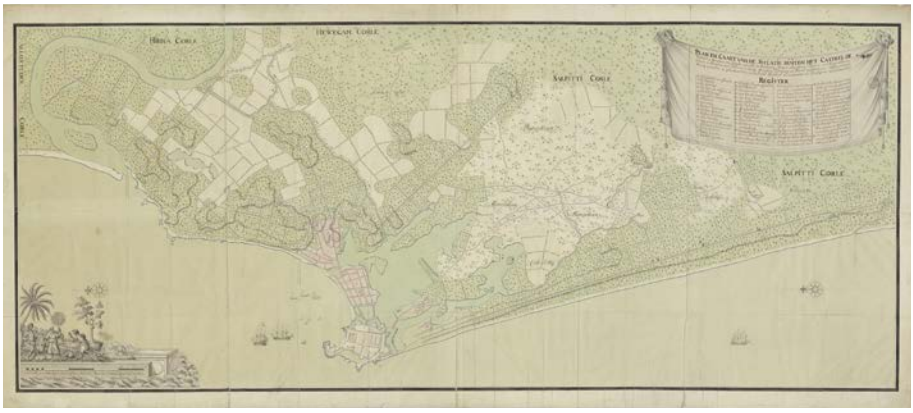
Figure 9 Map of Colombo during the Dutch period**



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According to Van Oers, the map (Figure 9) dated 1785 is believed to show the hinterland and illustrates a scheme of tree planting. Planting was apparently a practice of Dutch planning, intended to provide shade during hot weather. Van Oers noted the introduction of many planning regulations for maintaining streets and roofscapes in line with European standards, which are well documented. The expanded city is recorded in the Dutch map of the period (Figure 10).

The Dutch retained Colombo as the administrative centre of the maritime provinces that they controlled and governed. Indeed, they built more than 35 fortifications around the coastal belt of Sri Lanka. The footprints of most of these fortifications still survive today. They are well documented and declared as national monuments, one of which is Galle, a site to the south of Colombo, inscribed as Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications on the World Heritage List.

Figure 10 Map of Colombo during the Dutch period**

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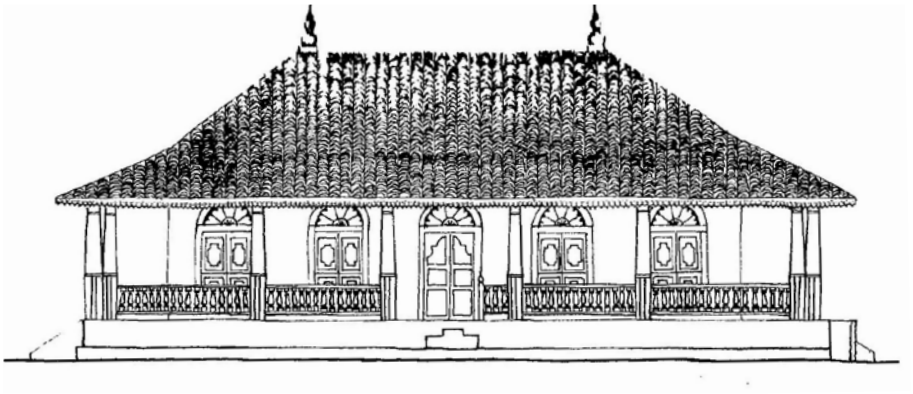
In line with the settlement pattern based on a street grid system, street houses became the most popular architectural model within the fortified settlements. Street houses were characterized by their narrow fronts, as seen in Dutch cities, and long interiors with a courtyard to provide light and ventilation. They were, however, modified to accommodate a colonnade veranda in the front of the house, in contrast to their counterparts in the Netherlands. The domestic architecture introduced inside the fort during the Dutch period and gradually modified subsequently spread beyond the fort to areas where the colonial power exercised its authority. Modifications to the architectural style incorporated familiar local features that were better suited to the tropical climate, for example, the addition of large verandas. In turn, the concepts and architectural details applied by the Dutch and developed by the local communities (Figure 11) had an influence on religious buildings (Buddhist monasteries) and domestic buildings.

The exchange of knowledge between the locals and those arriving from the Netherlands resulted in the emergence of new forms of architecture and new building techniques. Records relating to the construction of the Star Fort in Matara reveal that the works were managed by a local chieftain. The Dutch Hospital, built around the 1690s, is one of the most notable, surviving public buildings of the period. It is located in the heart of Colombo's old fort and is an exceptionally large and sophisticated building, which was restored by the Department of Archaeology in the early 1980s. It appears to be the only surviving hospital built by the VOC that still stands in any of the Dutch colonial territories. The British continued to use the building as a hospital for sick soldiers and sailors (Figure 12).

Figure 11 A Buddhist monastic building



© Gamini Wijesuriya.

Figure 12 A Dutch hospital

© Gamini Wijesuriya.

Figure 13 Wolvendaal church

© Gamini Wijesuriya.

Some of the medical professionals who served in the hospital were pioneers of botanical research during the period, supported by institutions in the Netherlands. It is recorded that these professionals were highly impressed with local medicinal practices; a local physician was appointed to work in the hospital, and numerous local medicines were used to treat patients, including a locally-made alcohol known as arak.

The Wolvendaal church (Figure 13) was also built during the same Dutch colonial period. Now designated as a protected national monument, it is one of the most dominant religious buildings in the city and it continues to function, supported by a small community.

British period

Colombo was captured from Dutch rule by the British in 1796, but major changes to the city began to be realized only after 1815 when the sovereignty of the country was seized by the British Empire and Colombo became the capital of the country. Unlike the Portuguese and the Dutch before them, the British focused not only on the city but also on the infrastructure and development of the entire country. Colombo itself had to be developed to provide for the growing responsibilities of running a country with newly introduced Western values and governance systems.

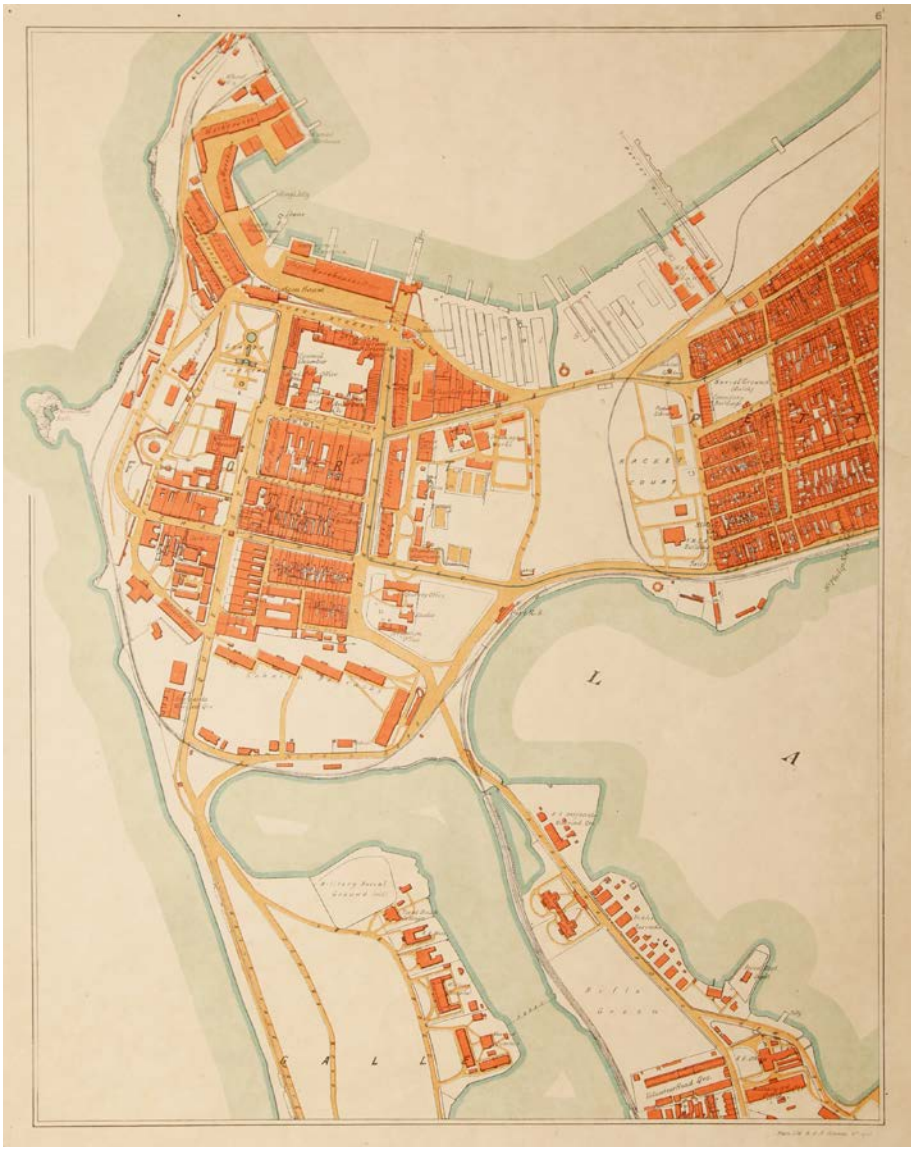
The expansion of the city included the demolition of the Dutch fortification in 1860 and the introduction of road networks and infrastructure that covered the entire country. The scale of change is particularly marked by the introduction of a railway network in 1856, in addition to roads. The modern city developed on the basis of the remains of fortifications, together with the layout and street patterns of the Colombo Fort, with a mix of new buildings emerging during the British period and thereafter (Figure 14).

In terms of governance, the British also introduced far-reaching changes with the introduction of numerous modern institutions, like those that had been established in India. These include the Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, which was created in the 1890s to document the country's archaeological heritage. The British also introduced legislation, such as the Housing and Town Improvements Ordinance, and created the Colombo Municipal Council in 1865, empowering the community to govern the city.

With the intention of developing the city of Colombo to cater to growing demands, the colonial government invited the famous British city planner, Sir Patrick Geddes (1854–1932), to present a plan for the city in 1921.

Geddes stressed the significance of the expansion and beautification of the city and he proposed to develop Colombo as a 'garden city' on a much larger scale. He referred to it as the "The Garden City of the East". The garden city movement was one of the earliest urban planning practices developed by Sir Ebenezer Howard in Britain in 1898 and the approach was propagated in the decades that followed.

Figure 14 Map of Colombo During the British Period**



© National Archives, Sri Lanka COL-43, 1904.

The garden cities were planned entities with self-contained communities surrounded by parks, containing proportionate and separate areas for residences, industry and agriculture. The unspoiled character of Colombo, with its abundance of available land and natural resources, will have prompted Geddes to adopt the garden city concept. Geddes also considered the development of Colombo Port to be a major element of his project because it would influence the spatial pattern of city growth, claiming that, "since the harbour is fundamental to Colombo, so must its future extensions not only increase the town, but largely determine its layout".

Another well-known British planner, Sir Patrick Abercrombie (1879–1957), contributed to consolidating the Geddes Plan in 1948. Abercrombie was well known for the post-Second World War replanning of London, and he became the first president of the newly formed group, the International Union of Architects, in the same year. Prior to his own involvement with Colombo, the architect/planner Albert Clifford Holliday (1897–1960), who was a student of Abercrombie, had also been invited to provide planning advice on Colombo in 1940.

To support the growth of the city, a wide variety of architectural concepts were introduced. The demands of the British, who settled and adopted new lifestyles, as well as the local elites, led to new and grand traditions of residential architecture. Among these is the typology of the bungalow, which was a very popular type of residential building during the British colonial period. The prototype was developed by the British in India and then introduced to Sri Lanka where it was modified by integrating some of the familiar features of the street houses of the previous era as well as climate-friendly features such as large verandas. Initially, these were single-storeyed, multi-roomed structures roofed with clay tiles and surrounded by a large garden, but – by the mid-twentieth century – they were extended vertically with a second storey. Façades with classical features, like those seen in public buildings, were also integrated into designs for these residential buildings.

The addition of various typologies of public buildings during the same period changed the architectural landscape of Colombo intensely. All of these are represented by buildings that have become landmarks of Colombo, and many are now listed as monuments. Among them are the National Museum (1877), the Victoria Memorial Hospital (1902), the Town Hall (1865), the General Post Office (1920), Galle Face Hotel (1914), and the Parliament Building (1930), to name just a few.

Some of the buildings existed previously. For example, the President's House located in the Fort had been built by the Dutch. The Fort became the main commercial centre, with the addition of buildings, such as the General Post Office, commercial buildings and warehouses. They were integrated into the urban plan that had taken shape during the Dutch period but were modified with the introduction of many new characteristics and architectural features, including the use of steel.

The decisions on where to locate major public buildings, such as the parliament and museums, seem not to have followed any pattern of zoning but instead appear to have been based on the availability of space within the expanded geographical area and its added road network.

With the expansion of the city over many years, and the corresponding growth of the population, comprising many different ethnic and religious groups, modern Colombo inherited a rich array of religious architecture represented by Buddhist monasteries, mosques, Hindu temples and Christian churches.

The Port of Colombo, which grew from a simple settlement, provided a haven for sailors of the Silk Roads and, subsequently, to the European maritime powers and independent Sri Lanka. Since 1978, the city of Colombo has been replanned and developed by the Urban Development Authority. The efforts of this government entity have succeeded in creating a modern city through zoning and rehabilitation work, while also focusing on the preservation of a number of historic buildings.

Conclusion

Colombo is a unique manifestation of the many dialogues and exchanges that took place along the Maritime Silk Routes, particularly in relation to urbanism and architecture. The cosmopolitan connections that occurred on the site transformed a tiny trading spot into a metropolis over a period of more than one thousand years. A result of the continued exchanges of ideas and knowledge between the different communities were the new town planning norms, which contrasted markedly with the centuries-old traditions in Sri Lanka and bestowed a particular identity on the modern city of Colombo. The city displays diverse architectural typologies, whether residential, public or religious, which range across a wide span of time. Interestingly, these standards of town planning and architecture began to spread to other towns around the coast of Sri Lanka, and these subsequently formed their own identities. Hundreds of such sites around the country are designated national monuments under existing heritage legislation – one of these is the World Heritage site of the Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications, located south of Colombo.

The city of Colombo itself has become a domain of dialogue between the diverse ethnic communities residing there, including such groups as the Sinhalese, Tamils, Sri Lankan Moors, Malay and Burger (the majority of the population is Sinhalese, i.e. 41% of the total population). The city has also become a centre of the conversation between communities that follow Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, each one with its own religious establishments and architectural ensembles. Indeed, it is this spirit of interchange that was fostered by the early port, followed by the city it grew into over many centuries, that makes Colombo the truly dynamic and synergetic international city it is today.

As a final note, the work of Sri Lanka's professional heritage community through ICOMOS Sri Lanka is worthy of mention. Back in 1984, in Dresden, during the seventh General Assembly of ICOMOS, Sri Lanka took the lead in introducing the concept of heritage of dual parentage, precisely in recognition of the heterogeneous and multicultural nature of sites that had developed over the course of time, as described earlier. This idea was further developed in Colombo in 1995, leading to the creation of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) of ICOMOS on mutual heritage under the leadership of the late Dr. Roland Silva and the late Prof. Fritz van Voorden (Delft University).

Today, this committee operates as the ISC on Shared Built Heritage (ISCSBH) and continues to research and promote the safeguarding and management of built heritage that is the product of different cultural influences, as the city of Colombo itself demonstrates so well.

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Chapter 6

The Urban Archaeology of Mumbai

By Suraj Pandit and Tanaya Damle

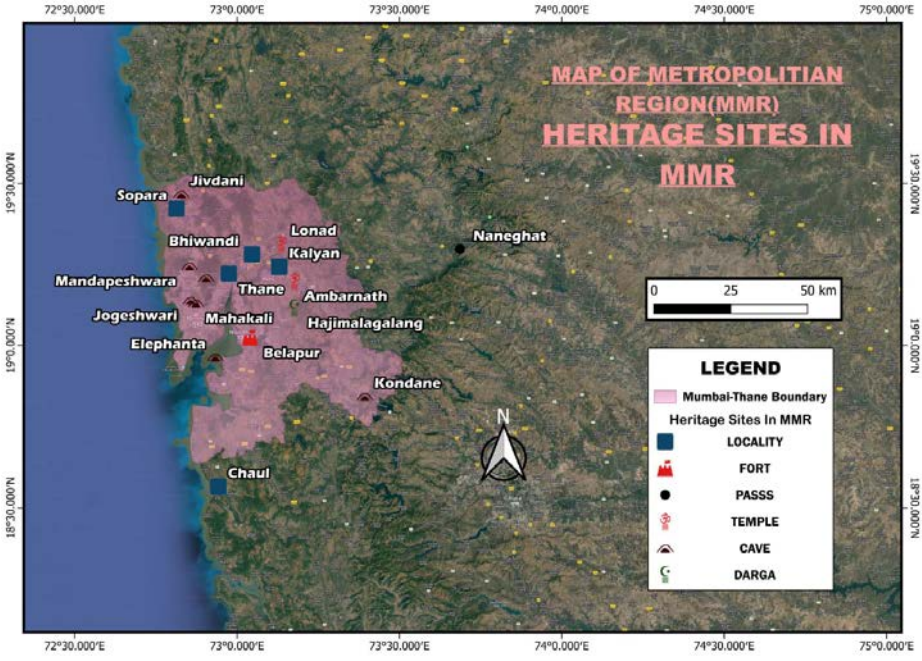
The megacity of metropolitan Mumbai has many identities, including as the economic capital of India, home to millions of migrants, a city of dreams and opportunities. There are cities within this megacity showcasing distinct lifestyles that are drastically different from one another. This jewel of the sea is a point of cultural exchange on the Silk Roads, a place where the land meets the sea. Geographically, this megacity has always been demarcated from the seven islands of the past, but the identity of these seven islands primarily emerged at a time when the British occupied the islands and, in turn, transformed their political and economic core. The varied islands have – to a large extent – contributed to Mumbai's progress, evolution and growth, making the city what it is today. This growth has now seen the development of the seven islands become the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) of today. This region specifically includes areas like Sopara, Thane, Kalyan and Chaul. The MMR defines its catchment by marking the rise of smaller municipal corporations, creating a chain of hierarchy, starting from the metropolitan megacity to smaller cities, towns and villages. The history of Sopara, Kalyan and Chaul has helped establish and understand the process of urbanization based on the historical evidence shown and discussed in various literary sources. For example, **The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea** ***is an important literary record that has been used to study various centres of trade and urbanization that had trade connections with one another, primarily on the Indo-Roman trade route.***

Factors like trade, import and export, and the acquired surplus from their outcomes, set the threshold for the waves of urbanization. This was due in part to the connections of the now MMR that brought about the waves of urbanization. Although modern urban factors and the urbanization boom comprise the data of past societies and culture, the core and periphery of present-day Mumbai fit exceptionally well within the scattered data. Hence, when understanding Mumbai and its urban archaeology as a whole, predominant factors like artefacts, architecture, communities, monuments and, most crucially, people have all been knitted together like a patchwork quilt, gradually built over a period of time, with the island its timeless thread.

Genesis of the Chronicles

It is primarily how time began and how, at every hour of creation, wonder happens. This is the unfolding of what urbanization is today, a process that began around the prehistoric age. Time goes back to around one *lakh*, or 100,000 years ago, when the first humans arrived on this island, which is now part of the metropolitan city of Mumbai. Their arrival served as a sign, evidence of which can be seen in approximately 20 sites throughout the MMR (Figure 1). It was the evolution of the city that enticed the migrants and immigrants of the Common Era to seek a living, and where primitive technology progressed from microliths.

Figure 1 Map of heritage sites in MMR**



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The region chosen was abundant in resources and was easily approachable by sea, exactly where early peoples discovered a habitable land. Further reference to the evolution of such habitable regions comes from literature and is reflected in the literary traditions associated with the region.

Buddhist canonical literature, as well as *The Periplus of the Erythrean* Sea, refers to the occupants of the region as barbaric or tribal. Indeed, the majority of the modern population in the north of Mumbai remains tribal. Probably with the help of the local people, traders in the Northern Plains of India explored the region for natural resources. They identified the natural riverine ports, and laid the foundation of early towns in the Mauryan Period. The traders, monks and artisans from Ganga-Yamuna valley travelled south to this region on the offshoots of the Silk Roads, laying the foundations of urban centres. They introduced new agricultural techniques and the urban religion known as 'Buddhism'. Sopara was the first port on the horizon of history in the port city of Mumbai!

Mumbai has shown that, in the last couple of centuries, this megacity was one of the best natural ports, a crucial hub in forging sea and trade connections between the Eastern hemisphere and the West. The differentiation of ports, whether singular or in a cluster, is primarily understood through such examples as Bharuch and Muziris that characterize a *singular* port in terms of import and export, as documented in the *Periplus* as well as the records mentioned by Pliny. Present Mumbai, however, is well known as a cluster of ports that, over time, has witnessed an expansion of its own.

These ports played a key role in mapping Mumbai on the maritime route of the Silk Roads. An offshoot known as the Dakshinapatha (an ancient road network in India linking the north to the south) links Mumbai via Bharuch and Mathura to the northern areas of modern Kashmir, Pakistan and Afghanistan (then known as Gandhar). The path is well documented in literary sources and it was also reflected in the art of the Mumbai region through the ages.

Passages from *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, a text written by an anonymous Egyptian Roman citizen in the first century CE, make reference to three important ports in the MMR: Suppala (Sopara), Calliena (Kalyan) and Semylla (Chaul). These riverine ports continued their activities till the late medieval period, as advanced by archaeological remains. The ancient landing places at Sopara, Kalyan and Chaul cannot be identified in the modern landscape as they have completely changed as a result of human activities, siltation of the rivers, and sea level changes. There is a depiction of Sopara port in one of the frescoes at Ajanta, though it is an artist's impression and no way close to Sopara's actual landscape, as narrated in the story of Purna. The story tells us that the city was well fortified with many gates, protected by the Yaksha (a demigod), on the periphery of which stood the Buddhist monastery. The landing point at Sopara must have been on the paleochannel, which is now completely silted and convincingly identified as 'Bhatale Lake', a remnant of the same paleochannel. Similarly, the landing spot at Kalyan in the ancient period must be in the area now known as Durgadi, one of the significant archaeological sites dating back to the Satavahana period.

Migrations define the demography of urban centres. The first millennium before the Common Era marked a period of major migrations from Western India as well as the northwestern frontier of modern Mumbai. In the absence of tangible material evidence, religious narrative literature (prevalent in the fertile plains of the Ganga [the Ganges]) helps to reconstruct the rise of urbanization in the region. Indeed, the urban history of the region can be traced back to at least 2,300 years.

The first known urban centre in the region is Shurparaka (or modern Sopara), which lies around 70 km in the north of the city centre of modern Mumbai. The town is known for its ancient Buddhist remains and the protected archaeological site of a stupa built to commemorate the legendary visit of Buddha to the monastery at the request of Bodhisattva Purna, thus assigning the sanctity of the cultural landscape. The site's antiquity is marked by the discovery of two fragments of edicts of King Ashoka Maurya dating back to the third century BCE. These are the two earliest known remains, in addition to a few other dilapidated structures of Buddhist stupas.

As narrated in Buddhist literature, the Buddhist monastery at Sopara evolved to become a major religious centre in the region. Monks travelled to this region from Ganga Valley, preaching Buddhism and converting many. As a result of the travelling preachers, Buddhist monasteries at Kalyan, Kanheri, Elephanta and Mahakali emerged, and trade in the region flourished. This resulted in the rise of Kanheri, around a century before the beginning of the Common Era. Kanheri was one of the most significant Buddhist settlements in an offshoot of the Silk Roads that reached into the Mumbai region. These monasteries flourished due to the extensive Indo-Roman trade and commercial activities of the major ports in the region on the Silk Roads: Sopara, Kalyan, Chaul and Elephanta. Migrants flocked to the port cities and contributed to the region's cultural diversity in their own way, as reflected in the art and archaeological evidence. Many of them were donors with their names appearing in inscriptions at Kanheri as traders, business folk, goldsmiths, ironsmiths, and so on. They established colonies based on communal identity. One such area in Kalyan has been named 'Gandharakabhami', as seen in an inscription from Cave 3 at Kanheri. This was likely from the colony of migrants from the Gandhara region. Even today, in Kalyan, there is an area called Gandhari. Art and inscriptions from Cave 3 at Kanheri provide glimpses of the offshoot of the Silk Roads reaching Mumbai from Central Asia. There are depictions of double hump camels, Buddha images carved in the style of the Mathura school of art of the Kushan period (Figure 2), an elephant rider with a Scythian cap, and a depiction of a griffin. The sculptural art from Cave 3 at Kanheri, especially the donor couples, exhibit the influence of Kshatrapa art of Gujarat. The art therefore links Kanheri with Western India (Gujarat and Mathura), Central Asia, Persia and the Kushan Empire.

Kanheri is one of the significant Buddhist monastic sites emerging as the nucleus of the religious landscape, with Mahakali, Ambivale and Padan as subordinate Buddhist centres. There is mention of 'Ambalika Vihara' in one of the inscriptions in Cave 3 at Kanheri, which was constructed at Kalyan.

Though there are no traces of any ancient structure at Kalyan, the archaeological mound at Kalyan provides evidence of early pottery, especially red polished ware. Apart from Sopara and Kanheri, Elephanta is the only site that provides tangible evidence from the early years of built structures and sculptural art. There is a stupa mound on the hill at Elephanta, which can be dated to the beginning of the Common Era. There are also remains of brick stupas seen within the modern settlements on Elephanta Island. Not far from the modern villages of Chaul-Revdanda, there are three small groups of Buddhist caves dating back to the beginning of the Common Era. As mentioned in the inscriptions, two sons of a goldsmith from Chaul gave donations to the Buddhist monastery at Kanheri. Elephanta and Chaul are sites with evidence of Roman amphoras, albeit as shards, not a complete amphora. This is the first concrete evidence of trade linking these ports with the ancient trade network in the Indian Ocean. These were the early ports in the Indo-Roman trade, visited by traders and well connected with the commercial centres on the Deccan Plateau. These ancient trade routes are still active and used by travellers today.

Figure 2 Mathura style image of the Buddha with attendants, Kanheri Cave 3

© Suraj Pandit.

These regional port towns were the early urban centres, with all these sites lying within a radius of around 80 km from modern Mumbai's city centre. These towns survived on the surplus produced by the surrounding villages, that is, the rural economy was based on agricultural activities. Two such villages, called Magathana (Magathane) and Saphau (Saphale), are mentioned in inscriptions of the second century CE in Kanheri Caves 21 and 32, from where agricultural lands were given in donations. The field at Magathane (referred to as *adhapana kheta*) is marked by two monolithic stupas, which today are in a poor state of preservation, surrounded by slums in Mumbai city. The owner of the field was Aparenu, a trader from Kalyan, who donated a fifty per cent share of his claim of agricultural produce in the field to the monastery at Kanheri.

This shows the very advanced economic system in place in the expansion of agriculture, as well as the role of traders in the spread of agriculture. It is interesting to note that the field was known as the 'land owned by Kanheri' until the 1950s. This marks the continuity of cultural traditions in the region over the last 1,800 years.

Sopara, Kalyan, Chaul and Elephanta were the first urban centres in the region. Though there are no intact traces of archaeological mounds due to rapid urbanization, these towns paved the foundation of urbanization with the help of the surplus products produced by neighbouring villages and the imports of goods in the ports and trade centres. These townships were well connected with distant commercial centres, such as Junnar, Ter, Bhokardan and Nasik on the Deccan Plateau, on the one hand, while connected with cities in the north, such as Bharuch and Mathura, on an offshoot of the Silk Roads on the other. This not only resulted in the rise of prosperous trade but also a means of exchange of ideas and cultures. Monks, artists, intellectuals and traders travelled along these trade routes, with these townships emerging as the patrons of the seat of learning, as seen in Kanheri, for example.

Kanheri had a well-developed water management system designed and in operation in the latter half of the second century CE. Architects made use of the natural slopes of the hill to collect rainwater, storing it in various rock-cut water cisterns near caves. A natural depression at Kanheri was converted into a reservoir in the second century CE by constructing two stone walls, as known through an inscription near Cave 41. This is a unique example of a wall construction with the help of stone blocks and iron nails holding them together. Part of the walls are still intact and can be seen at the site. This rainwater harvesting system is a classic example of traditional wisdom that was passed along the trade routes.

Traders on the Silk Roads travelled to the west coast of India along the Dakshinapatha. Mauryans and Satavahans provided the favourable environment for trade to grow and the region to prosper. The port cities in the MMR connected these land routes with the sea routes going in the direction of the Roman Empire. This resulted in the emergence of market places, the rise of travelling artisans, and the exchange of ideas. It is probable that one of these ports launched the journey of the famous ivory handle from the Deccan that was found in Pompeii. Mumbai showcased various art styles and architectural forms from very distant regions at the start of the Common Era. Intangible cultural heritage associated with these monuments is preserved in the literary traditions. This was the stroke that marked the genesis of the Chronicles of the city, known today as Mumbai.

The commercial pedestal

The decline of the Roman Empire brought a lull in commercial activities, which coincided with the fall of Satavahanas in the Deccan. The climate was thus unfavourable for the great commercial leap, which began to change within the first three quarters of the first century of the Common Era.

However, the rise of Vakatakas in the Deccan and their matrimonial alliance with Empirical Guptas resulted in the 'greater economic policy', which essentially covered the geographical region of the Indian subcontinent. The network of trade routes connecting northern commercial centres with the Deccan and Konkan was thus revived, and the safety and glory of this segment of the Silk Roads was restored. This resulted in the rise of regional dynasties like the Traikutakas.

The Traikutakas in the fifth and sixth centuries CE were responsible for safeguarding Western regional trade routes, as they claim in one of their copper pleats, which includes an offshoot of the Silk Roads reaching into the Western coast. The age of the Traikutakas revived art in the region. There are caves and sculptures added to the sites, such as in Kanheri, Mahakali, Nasik, Mahad and Karle; caves were excavated at Kanheri, Magathane and Lonad (Figure 3). This phase was dominated by Mahayana Buddhism, resulting in the creation of various sculptural panels. Due to changes in religious rituals, the ritual space had to be redesigned, resulting in a drastic change in the architectural pattern of Buddhist monasteries. Parallels with this can be seen in Gandhara. The early *viharas* (an early type of Buddhist monastery) and their residential structures have now evolved into cave temples (Figure 4). Each of the newly made Buddhist caves in the fifth and sixth centuries in the Mumbai region developed with a shrine in the back wall, with an image of the Lord Buddha installed at its centre.

Figure 3 Map of heritage sites in Mumbai-Thane districts**

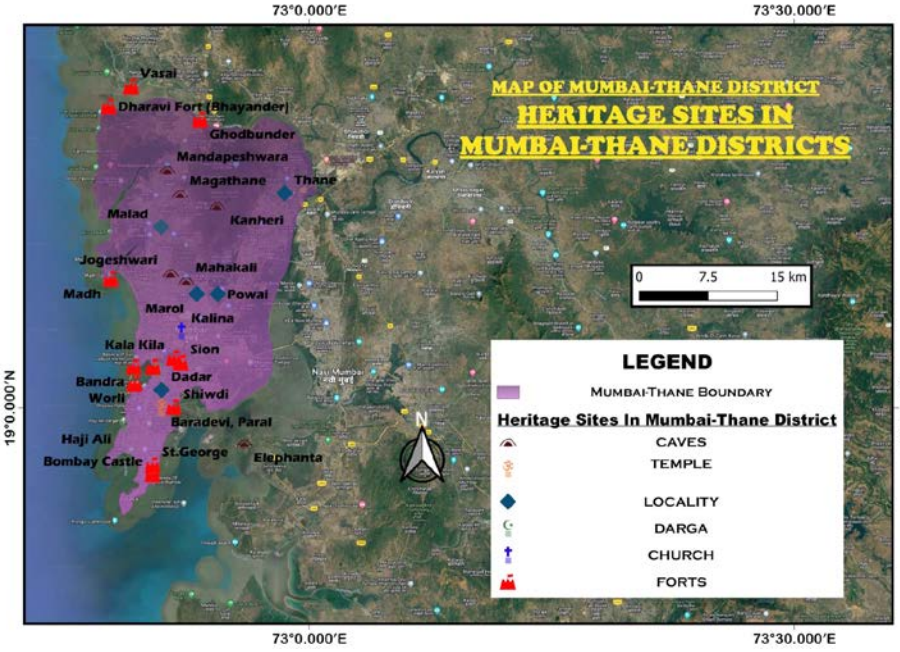

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Figure 4 General view of the Mahakali Caves

© Suraj Pandit.

Kanheri emerged as the nucleus of the religious landscape with many peripheral monastic sites, and it became one of the important Buddhist monastic sites in South Asia. Many pilgrims visited the site, travelling the trade routes leading to Mumbai. Old trade routes coming from Central Asia to Mathura and then to Kanheri were thus revived. In addition, various Buddhist schools in Central Asia and South Asia extended their influence into the region.

One of the significant stupas constructed in brick and stone at Kanheri dates to the late fifth century CE. A copperplate mentioning the reign of the Traikutaka king was reportedly found in this stupa. The stupa is primarily made of bricks covered with ornamented and dressed stones. Beautiful figures of Ganas, Yaksha, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appear as the protector of the monument. This stupa is significant as it displays the artistic influence from Ajanta, the classical site of the Vakatakas in the Deccan. The donor of this stupa, as mentioned in the said copper plate, is Buddharuchi, a resident of the village Kanaka in the Sindhu Vishaya (district), the son of glorious Buddhasri and Pushyavarman. Sindhu Vishaya is in the modern Sindh region of Pakistan, though the village is not sufficiently identified. This confirms two significant points: the revival of older trade routes, following a lull in the economy, and the spread of the glory of the Buddhist monastery at Kanheri along the trade routes.

Not just the northern land routes but also the offshoots of Dakshinapatha in Godavari and Krishna Valley in the Deccan were equally well connected to the region. Passes in Sahyadri linked commercial places like Nasik and Junnar with Mumbai, which were on the route to the eastern coast of India.

There are no less than 25 inscriptions reported from Kanheri, which are in box-headed Brahmi script, a paleographic variety extensively used by the Vakatakas in the Deccan. One of the inscriptions at Kanheri makes reference to a Buddhist school named Aparaselia.

The Vakatakas travelled to the region from the Lower Krishna valley, especially from sites such as Amravati and Nagarjunakonda. Some of the donors claim their villages to be in the vicinity of Banavasi in Karnataka. This evidence confirms that the sites in the Mumbai region were not only well connected with the cities and towns in Northern Indian and Central Asia, but also with the commercial and religious centres in the Deccan and South India. The region was also well connected through the sea, resulting in a melting pot of ideas where the two worlds (Western and Eastern) converged.

Figure 5 Eleven-Headed Avalokiteshwara, Kanheri Cave 41

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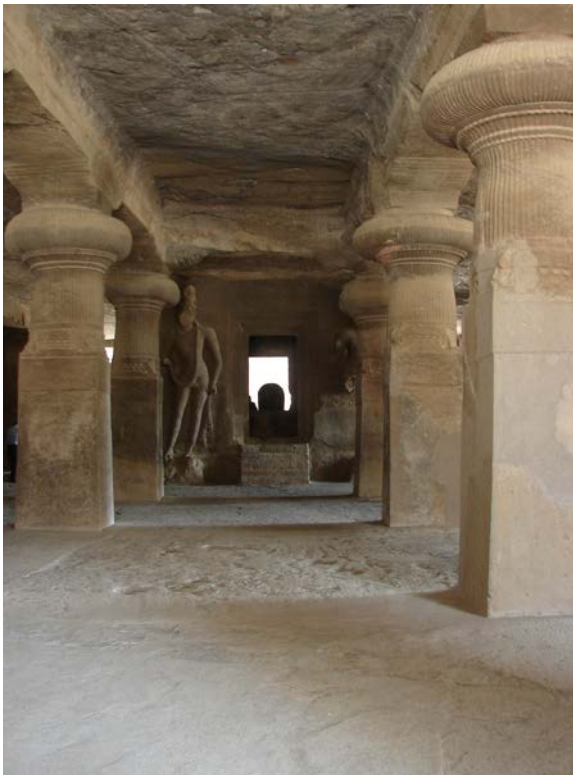
The sixth century gave us the masterpieces of sculptural Buddhist art in the region. One of the unique sculptures of Bodhisattva Eleven-Headed Avalokitesvara, found in Cave 41 at Kanheri, is the earliest known sculpture of the deity in the world (Figure 5). The concept of Buddhism travelled along the Silk Roads and reached Kashmir and then to Central Asia. A manuscript on the rituals associated with the same deity, contemporary to the sculpture, has been reported from Gilgit. The ritual text travelled along the Silk Roads and reached the western coast of India. The famous Chinese monk and traveller, Xuanzang, travelled on the same trade route with a wooden image of this deity from Kanheri and made the cult popular in East Asia. The trade route was a way of disseminating Mahayana Buddhist cults and traditions across the Old World. The literary sources support the spread of Buddhism from the region to South and Southeast Asia along sea routes.

Xuanzang visited Mumbai in the seventh century CE and gave a brief description of Kanheri caves. He talked about the extensive woodwork, the immense sculptures, and the various rituals being performed at the site. He made a brief reference to the stupa at Sopara. This stupa was opened in the eighth century CE and a cascade was reinstalled with the Buddhist bronzes.

Buddhist literature and Xuanzang's travelogue give us some insight into the legends associated with sites in the Mumbai region, as well as glimpses of the life of monks and people. They talk about the traders reaching here from both the sea and from the land.

It is not just Buddhism that travelled along these trade routes but also one of the early schools of Shaivism, known as Pashupatism, which also left its trace on material culture. Though the earliest evidence of Pashupata Shaivas in the region dates back to the second century CE, their influence in art and architecture is clearly visible by the sixth century CE. The new traders were not only followers of Mahayana Buddhism, some of them were Jain as well as Hindu. They changed the religious fabric of the region and the material expressions in art. Gigantic monuments were created at Jogeshwari, Elephanta and Mandapeshwara, where more than life-size sculptures were carved.

Figure 6 General view of the Elephanta Caves



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The Elephanta Caves are one of the World Heritage sites among this new form of Hindu monastic architecture that laid the foundation for later developments in Asian architecture (Figure 6). They are technically caves but, conceptually, they are temples. They are decorated with a specific iconographic scheme. These Pashupatas have left their imprint in art and inscriptions, not only in the Mumbai region but also reaching up to Kizil. These architectural forms have left a deep impact on Indian architectural tradition. They paved the foundation for the architectural marvels created later in the future, such as the monolithic Kailash Temple at Ellora. These Hindu monasteries flourished in the Mumbai region in the sixth century CE and survived for the next 1,000 years until the arrival of the Portuguese. Worth mentioning is the sixth century image of Sadashiva (a form of Shiva) at Parel, locally known as Baradevi (12 goddesses) (Figure 7). This is considered a manifestation of the principles of the Pashupata philosophy in the classical aesthetic tradition. This sixth century sculpture was fortuitously found in Mumbai in a road widening excavation and is now considered a masterpiece of Indian art.

Figure 7 Sadashiva (Baradevi), Parel

© Chinmay Bhave.

Trade was dominated by Arabs, who were not only responsible for the revival of the sea routes but also the inland routes. Cultural exchange between the eastern coast and the western coast of India had been observed. There are inscriptions at Kanheri where the donor is from Gauda Desha (modern West Bengal in India and Bangladesh). A stone image of Avalokiteshwara and Buddhist bronzes were found from the modern campus of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay in Mumbai, which stylistically can be dated back to around the same period, that is, the seventh to the eighth century.

But the most important evidence comes from the Sopara Stupa (Figure 8) in the form of a set of bronzes. These bronzes show the stylistic affinity to Pala art of Eastern India. Sopara played a vital role in trade, linking the Western sea routes in the Arabian Sea with the Eastern sea routes in the Bay of Bengal. Indeed, Sopara was a link between the networks of sea routes and land routes.

Figure 8 Stupa Remains, Sopara

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This is probably because many Arab travellers had mentioned their visit to Sopara in their travelogues. A set of bronzes reportedly from the Sopara Stupa are stylistically influenced by contemporary Pala art and are now in the possession of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai. During the Rashtrakuta period, the city of Sopara had developed contacts with Eastern Indian commercial centres. The bronzes of seven Buddhas, namely, Vipasyin, Sikhi, Vishvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa and Shakyamuni, along with the one future Buddha, Maitreya, were found along with the cascade.

These various discoveries indicate that the ports in the Mumbai region were well connected with other cities and commercial centres by sea and land routes. As narrated by numerous Arab traders who visited this region from the eighth to the twelfth century, there were many items exported from ports in the Mumbai region, which were imported from various other commercial centres.

The meeting of sea and land routes brought together a synthesis of cultural identities, enhancing the scope for economic and cultural exchange. Land routes to the eastern coast of India connected the region with Southeast Asia, while sea routes in the Arabian Sea established a dialogue with West Asia, Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. Arabs who arrived on the western coast as traders probably settled in the region. One of the copperplate inscriptions of the tenth century CE informs us that the Arabs were the feudal lords of the Rashtrakutas on the western coast of India. Arabs and Parsis were living in the vicinity of each other in peace and harmony. Although we see various communities and religious groups migrating to the region, leaving signs in the form of monumental architecture and art, there is no evidence of any conflict. This was only possible thanks to the surplus wealth produced by trade on the Silk Roads. Thus, this period in the history of Mumbai, connecting it with the Silk Roads, paved the way for the rise of new urban centres, like Thane, to enjoy prosperity and to accommodate more migrants.

The communal renaissance

One of the important urban centres that emerged in the early medieval period was Thane. Known as Shri Sthanaka in inscriptions of Shilahara kings, Thane was their capital. The township of Thane emerged on either side of the stream (which is lost today), flowing to the Thane creek; the major freshwater supply to the expanded city was through the lakes. Indeed, the city of Thana, like Sopara, is known as the 'city of lakes'. Thana was one of the important ports on the river Ulhas. Arabs ruled over the Arabian Sea and controlled the entire trade with the West and Southeast Asia. Spices, horses, sandalwood, teakwood, oils, scents were important items of import and export on this segment of the Silk Routes. New ports like Vasai and Ghodbundar (Ghod, horse; Bunder, port) on the Ulhas river emerged. Arab travellers such as Al-Masudi and Al-Beruni, operating in different centuries, spanning around 300 years, have mentioned this horse trade. The traders who arrived in these ports came from West Asia, Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia.

This region was one of the major links between the Eastern world and the Western world. This resulted in waves of migrations of Arabs, Persians (Parsis), Jews, Chinese, and many others who settled and introduced new cultures. Religions such as Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism were preached, and Arab traders have recounted that followers of these religions lived together harmoniously. Al-Masudi (tenth century CE) tells us in his travelogue that around 10,000 Persians and Arabs lived in Chaul. In the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo visited Thane and narrated an interesting account of Shilaharas and the horse trade with Arabs. The region was metropolitan in nature. This prosperity was reflected in the art and architectural forms prevalent in the region. Unfortunately, however, hardly any specimens are intact today owing to the intolerant religious policy of the Portuguese. Temples at Ambarnath and Lonad remain exceptional specimens of eleventh- and twelfth-century temples in the region (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Shiva Temple at Ambarnath

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The Shilaharas, successors of the Rashtrakutas in the region, were staunch supporters of Hinduism and Jainism, and were responsible for the construction of elaborate temples. Temples were non-food producing institutions and survived on surplus produce in the region. They had a specific role to play in the cultural life of the local communities, as well as being the centre of economic activities. Economic activities in the villages and the temple towns were temple centric. Even though these towns were commercial centres, temples played a vital role in their day to day functioning. The density of temples in the region is directly proportional to the surplus produced.

Mumbai experienced thriving commercial activities in the period between the eighth and thirteenth centuries. Literary and epigraphical sources provide glimpses of the prosperity enjoyed by the people in the region.

Along with the earlier monastic settlements, like Kanheri, Mahakali, Magathane, Jogeshwari, Elephanta and Mandapeshwar, there had been a rise of new religious institutions, as suggested by the sculptural fragments reportedly from Elephanta and Jogeshwari. These temples functioned until the sixteenth century, until the establishment of inquisition courts in the region by Christian missionaries turned them into ruins.

Archaeological and literary sources tell us that the old market places and ports like Sopara, Kalyan, Elephanta and Chaul continued as economic and political centres. In addition, some new centres, like Thane, Mahim, Marol and Malad, began to emerge. Although these new centres did not thrive as the established ones, they had a specific role to play in the new economy. Their existence is marked by the scattered remains of monumental temples in the region, now lost in the mists of time.

Thane, the capital of the Shilaharas, provides evidence of sculptural masterpieces, with architectural remains recovered from the various lakes on which these temples stood. A few sculptural fragments were unearthed during the construction of the modern city of Thane. There is a beautiful sculpture of Brahma located in the vicinity of Siddheshwara Temple on the banks of the lake bearing the same name (Figure 10). This is one of the sculptural masterpieces in Thane. Some of the sculptures were reportedly found in the Thane Jail, originally the Portuguese fort. Aside from the Siddheshwara Temple and the Thana Jail, architectural and sculptural fragments were also found in the Thane Police Line, the Kopineshwara Temple and Jondhali Baugarea of the modern Thane. The remains from these locations suggest that the temples were constructed during the eleventh to the thirteenth century. There is mention in the Portuguese records that 12 temples were torn down, the remains of which were used for the construction of Christian monasteries and churches in Thane.

Figure 10 Brahma, Siddheshwara Temple, Thane

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To maintain the sanctity of many of these temple fragments, which were submerged in the waters of the nearby lake, they are slowly being recovered in the process of cleaning these lakes. The inscriptions mention the land grants, providing glimpses of the cultural life of the communities who owned these temples. Certainly, the age of Shilahara was the golden age of Mumbai. This was the third wave of urbanization in the region, with many new migrants arriving to contribute to the rise of Mumbai.

Migrants were assimilated into the urban society, shaping the towns by contributing to the cultural legacy of Mumbai. Even after assimilation, they maintained their unique identity in the urban social structure by maintaining their community identity. Communities such as Pathare Prabhu, Pathare Kshatriya and Samavedi Brahmins maintained their intangible cultural traditions within their families and communities, which evolved into exclusive oral traditions associated with their history and culture.

The oral history compiled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the legendary King Bimba, known as Bimbakyana or Mahikavatichi Bakhar, is one such example. Shilaharas ruled for around 350 years, followed by the short rule of the kings of the Yadava Dynasty in the early fourteenth century and then by the indirect rule of Khiljis and Tughlaqs of the Delhi Sultanate. The local kings ruled with the names of sultans. One of the prominent local heroes who survived in the cultural memory as a historical image is King Bimba. His family ruled over the region for no less than three generations, as suggested by legends and supported by archaeological evidence. It is believed that he was responsible for the construction of the fort at Mahim, one of the oldest forts in Mumbai. It has undergone numerous renovations over time, as suggested by the different phases of construction of the walls and the types of bastions we see in the fort. This was supposedly the capital of King Bimba. The fort is built in the local stone and is located at one of the entry points of Mumbai on the banks of the creek of river Mahim (now known as Mithi). This fort played a vital role in protecting both Mumbai and the traders during the medieval period. Mahim was one of the Seven Islands of Mumbai in the past, known for its fruit orchards and the dwellings of its fisher folk. The British constructed a causeway linking the island with the mainland, and it is now a part of the island city of Mumbai. There were sculptural fragments associated with a temple, and a hero stone was found in this fort, indicating that it was a thirteenth to fourteenth-century temple. Not far from the fort are remains of two significant temples, now maintained as fragments in the modern structures of the temples of mother goddesses: Shitaladevi and Jarimari. These temples date from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century and were destroyed, reconstructed and renovated over this period, resulting in the modern reinforced cement concrete (RCC) structure. There are temple fragments found in the vicinity of Mahim railway station indicating the existence of the temple. It is interesting to note that one of the pillar capitals, with five brackets attached to it, is worshipped as the goddess in one of the small temples near the Mahim railway station. This pillar gives us a better understanding of the elaborate structure of the temple that once stood there.

Many of the old temple fragments are now worshipped as minor deities in different temples. People here have recycled the cultural material for religious activities in an innovative way. These fragments come from temples that were destroyed in the seventeenth century. Each of these temples was surrounded by a specific group of communities. The settlement pattern hints at the waves of migrations, resulting in the creation of a unique landscape.

The legend of King Bimba further tells us that his grandson, Pratapabimba, shifted his capital from Mahim to the mainland of the Salsette in the north. Salsette is the largest island of Mumbai, which now covers the area of the Mumbai suburbs. There was a record 126 villages and two towns in Salsette during the reign of Pratapabimba. Marol and Malad are mentioned as administrative headquarters, with a unit of 66 villages under their control. Malad and Marol, the suburbs of modern Mumbai, provide evidence of remains of temples similar to the ones at Mahim and Thane. As these two urban areas are part of Mumbai metropolitan city and the layers of construction in the modern period have left no traces of archaeological mounds, the sculptural remains found in the vicinity of urban skyscrapers reveal the secrets of its medieval past. Mahim has been mentioned as Mahim Bimbasthana (the place from where King Bimba rules) in one of the fourteenth-century inscriptions reported by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay. The same inscription talks about Marol as an administrative headquarters.

The township of Marol was converted into a Christian settlement in the sixteenth century. The main temple in the town, situated on the banks of the Devtalav (Lake of Gods), was destroyed in order to build St. John the Baptist Church in 1579. Later, in 1840, the church was shifted to the present location in modern Marol due to an epidemic outbreak. The parish of the church is well documented and gives details of the medieval settlements. This town was divided into various localities, locally known as *ali-s* (alley) and *pada-s* (aboriginal; snapper settlements). These were community specific settlements. The location of the temple fragments suggests that each of the temples was located in one of these residential units. Even after the conversion of Marol to Christianity, this community and occupation-based pattern of settlement remained the same, as was reflected in the parish plan of the church (Figure 11). This gives us a better understanding of the nature of urban settlements in pre-Portuguese Mumbai. Most of the structures in these settlements were made of perishable material, such as wood, which can still be observed today in the smaller towns in Konkan. What makes these settlements 'urban' is primarily due to their high population density, the development of infrastructure, their involvement in trade and commerce, public architecture such as temples, a centralized administrative system, and the adoption of script.

Similar patterns of settlement can be seen developing in and around Sopara from the eighth to the thirteenth century. This urban diffusion was due to the sudden rise in the population of migrants. The older settlements at Sopara evolved into multiple residential units on the banks of lakes and reservoirs.

Figure 11 Remains of St. John the Baptist Church, Marol

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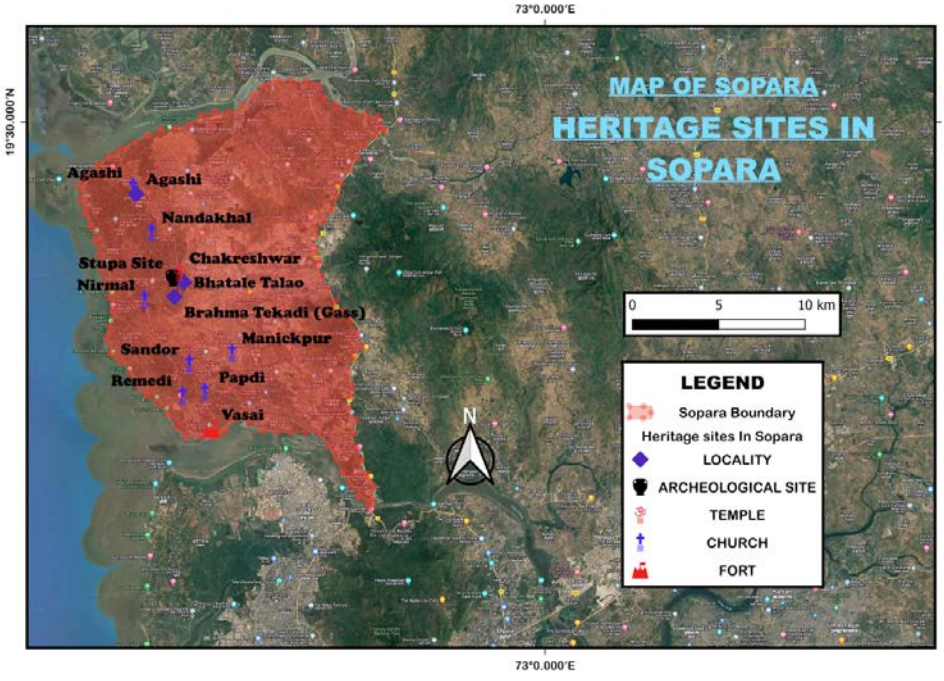
More than 350 stray antiquities, in the form of architectural and sculptural fragments from the Sopara and Vasai region, have been reported during the project undertaken to document archaeological remains (Figure 12). Vasai was the northern capital of the Portuguese; the major impact of their religious fanaticism was thus experienced in this region. Sopara was the commercial centre and port city, at least since the third century BCE, before the rise of the Shilaharas.

Figure 12 Map of heritage sites in Sopara**



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By the tenth century, it had emerged as the administrative headquarters of a unit of 66 villages. These villages were located on the banks of lakes and reservoirs, which were evolving into smaller townships. By the eleventh to the twelfth century, these lakes and associated temples were assigned the sanctity necessary for a new religious landscape to emerge. The town of Sopara gained a new identity as a pilgrim centre. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain, all three Indic religions, had woven myths around this sacred landscape to assign and promote the sanctity of the region, which likely significantly contributed to the economic prosperity of the region.

Literary sources and the tribal oral traditions reveal the migration of people from Western India. Many of these migrants were traders and were involved in seafaring. Some of the folk songs in Gujarati suggest that from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, the Gujarati traders settled on the eastern coast of Africa and in the Gulf of Persia.

Early medieval India had seen the revival of land routes in the Northwest frontier region, a segment of the Silk Roads. Sea and land routes had converged at these ports for trade and exchange. The contacts with Arabia and Persia were strengthened, not only for trade but also by Islam. The arrival of the Portuguese marked the beginning of a new era. The political turmoil that ensued resulted in a colourful social fabric. This new social structure had maintained the communal identities across the religions. Their exclusivity was commanded by the economic activities and the commercial need to coexist, with trade binding them together. This cultural synthesis resulted in the 'Communal Renaissance'.

The foreign retreat

The fall of Constantinople changed the course of history in Asia, impacting trade on the Silk Roads. European sailors had undertaken the herculean task to reach India, the East and the Far East. The arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut opened new trade routes of the Silk Roads into the sea, which further expanded into the Indian Ocean. This was to leave a long-lasting impact on the modern world. The Portuguese naval fleet faced major opposition from the Islamic kings of Zamurains of Calicut, the Mamluks of Egypt, and the sultans of Gujarat. This resulted in battles at Chaul in 1508 and Diu in 1509. This was followed by a series of wars resulting in the Treaty of Vasai (1534), by which Vasai and the Mumbai islands came under the direct control of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese settlement at Vasai, their northern capital, was mainly restricted to the fort, which was likely the older fort that had been extensively renovated by the Portuguese (Figure 13). Expansion of the territory and the spread of Christianity were two important objectives of the nobles and the church. The new migrants introduced new architectural forms. The architecture of the fort, churches, monasteries and residential structures were different from the architectural traditions of the region. This was a new architectural language and aesthetic, which was introduced to the

region for the first time. This fort had a fortification wall enclosing the entire town, which included 10 bastions, nine of which were named: Cavalheiro, Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, Reis Magos Santiago, São Gonçalo, Madre de Deus, São João, Elefante, São Pedro, São Paulo and São Sebastião (São Sebastião was also called Porta Pia or pious door of Baçaim [Vasai]). It was through this bastion that the Marathas would enter the city to defeat the Portuguese. There were two medieval gateways: one on the sea side, called Porta do Mar, with massive teak gates cased with iron spikes, and the other was called Porta da Terra. There were 90 pieces of artillery, 27 of which were made out of bronze, and 70 mortars, 7 of which were bronze. The port was defended by 21 gunboats, each carrying 16 to 18 guns. This fort still stands today with the outer shell and ruins of seven churches. The church bells were installed in the various temples in Maharashtra by the Marathas after conquering the fort and destroying the churches. The Portuguese built nine churches in and around Sopara at Nirmal (1557), Remedi (1557), Sandor (1566), Agashi (1568), Nandakhal (1573), Papdi (1574), Pali (1595), Manickpur (1606), and Mercês (1606). All these beautiful churches are still used by the Christian community of Vasai following their renovation, with some of the original altars still preserved. There are churches constructed by the Portuguese in Mumbai at Kalina (1606), Sion (1596), Mandapeshwara Shiva Monastery (1547), Dadar (1596), Bandra (1575), Marol (1579), Powai (1550), and Thane (1582). Many of these old structures are now in a dilapidated condition. They are not in any state of worship, but have been maintained well enough to be reconstructed and refurbished in the last 150 years.

Figure 13 Remains of the fort, Vasa

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St. Francis Xavier's visit to Vasai in 1548 changed the course of history. All the centres of religious importance in the pre-Portuguese period were converted to Christianity and re-gained their religious importance. Mandapeshwar Cave is one of the best examples of this. The Shaiva cave temple was converted into a church, which was followed by the construction of a separate building for the church, the monastery, the college convent and the orphanage. Though remains of many of these buildings can be seen in the vicinity of the cave, no structure can be decisively identified, except for the chapel and the monastery. The cave was eventually enclosed by a wall and was used as a crypt.

Vasai's occupation by the Portuguese also gave a new dimension to local shipbuilding activities, which evolved into a major industry in the region. Local craftsmen and artisans were trained to build new types of vessels. It is interesting to note how this new industry developed in the region, which endured until the recent past. This contributed to the rise of Mumbai as one of the best ports in India during the British period.

The Portuguese were also responsible for the construction of forts in Mumbai. The forts at Mahim and Belapur existed even before the arrival of the Portuguese. Legend has it that the Mahim fort was probably built by the local king, whereas the Belapur fort was constructed by the Siddis of Janjira. Siddis arrived in India from Southeastern Africa and Ethiopia. Initially, they served the sultans of Gujarat, and then they became independent rulers from Murud, where they had a capital in a fort on an island. They were one of the major allies of the Ottomans against the Portuguese in the Arabian Sea. Mumbai is separated from the mainland by the creek near Thane, south of which stands a small fort at Belapur. This fort was constructed by Siddis to overlook the Thane creek, which was soon conquered by the Portuguese fleet.

The Portuguese are also credited for the construction of the forts at Bombay Castle (1554), Dongari, opposite Vasai on the other side of the creek (1596), Bandra Fort (1640), Thane Fort, Ghodbundar Fort and Madh Fort. These forts have typical angular bastions. Bombay castle was torn down by the British in the process of planning the New Bombay (old name of Mumbai). Very few of the remains of Bandra and Dongari forts can be seen today. Madh Fort was conquered by the Maratahs and was completely rebuilt. Ghodbundar Fort, an older fort, was rebuilt and expanded by the Portuguese during their occupation. Thane Fort was constructed by the Portuguese, but later conquered by the Marathas. Thane Fort is the only fort that is preserved today, and which gives us a better understanding of the defence architecture of the Portuguese as well as the Marathas. Three other forts assigned to Portuguese rule are also worth mentioning: Korlai, Revdanda and Arnala. All these forts were constructed mainly to protect the ports and the sea routes, and were positioned either on the island or on the mouth of creeks of rivers like Vaitarana, Ulhas and Kundalika. They were responsible for protecting the core of Portuguese dwellings, trade and shipbuilding centres.

This chapter in the history of Mumbai is more linked with the sea routes connecting the Eastern world with the Western world. The older trade routes were still in use, with the ambition of colonial expansion. The world was coming closer. Long distance sea routes were more active than ever before. India was a significant land of commercial exchange between the West and the East. Shards of Chinese porcelain are found in large quantities in these Portuguese settlements. The synthesis of cultures resulted in the emergence of a unique social class, which includes converted communities like East Indians and Kupari. They were mainly traders, farmers and Hindu priests who converted to Christianity and worked as a link between the local populations and migrants.

The story of the first Indian Christian saint, Gonsalo Garcia, is also worth mentioning. He came from Vasai, with a Portuguese father and an Indian mother. He had travelled to the Far East and up to Japan on the trade route with traders. He became a missionary and preached in Southeast Asia and East Asia. His desire for seafaring defines the nature of Mumbai, which had evolved over the centuries as part of the expansion of the Silk Roads into the sea and over land.

The stroke of midnight

With the predominance of the sea trade, the British made sure that their arrival in Mumbai rekindled the light that was perceived as white noise under the Portuguese in Vasai. The leap of faith taken by the British afforded the city a new beginning – like the stroke of midnight from where the waves of modernity were liberated. These waves resulted in the formation of a city centre that was modern, urban and on track with the changes of this continuously evolving city.

The changing scope of the Silk Roads reflected on the growth of Mumbai. The city flourished as one of the major commercial centres in the Indian Ocean, with the foundations of modern Mumbai laid down by the British. Despite the hardships of colonial expansion, the inquisition courts and medieval wars, a ray of hope appeared on the horizon in the form of interaction with modernity and the consolidation of trade. Technology was to change the world, and Mumbai in Asia was the city where it began. The city of Mumbai started to expand, assimilating neighbouring villages and townships to grow into a megacity. The Portuguese handed over a cluster of the Seven Islands to the British, keeping the northern part of modern Mumbai for themselves. The development of South Mumbai began with the adoption of the various architectural forms and art styles seen across the world. It grew in such a manner that even though it had been ruled by different powers, such as the Portuguese, Marathas, Mughals, Gujarat sultans and the British, it functioned as one cultural landscape and economic unit. This resulted in the development of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

This expansion of the city was the ultimate result of the formation of the MMR, which did not restrict its scope to the Seven Islands but also took in the area further south to include Chaul, Sopara in the north, and Kalyan in the east. The Mumbai of today has over the years been developed, reclaimed, urbanized and abridged with people who have had an inclination towards money, growth, trade, art and fame. It is with the same emotion of aspiration that Western traders experienced the city and its wealthy port when they decided to shift their voyage southwards into the oceans and identified Mumbai as their focal point from their main pit stop, the Cape of Good Hope.

The fall of Constantinople and access to the Silk Roads, specifically for Europeans, steered a revolution led by Westerners, who made it a point to establish, expand and change the outline of the trade routes. The seaward expansion of the Europeans sent a signal to ocean-ward polities, alerting them to the expansion that had been ongoing since the beginning of time. The prime focus was to assert dominance over the trade routes, whether seawards or landwards, while obtaining a degree of comfort with the newly established trade routes, thereby ensuring a strong and dominant grip on the established modes of expansion. The voyage led by Vasco da Gama was what sparked the travel southwards from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope, thus tracing a path northeast to reach the Indian subcontinent. It is known through written records that the eastern coast of Africa was a home to Indian traders who may have guided Vasco da Gama to reach his desired destination. This is evident when considering that travel and trade via the sea was possible despite the political uprisings. Vasco da Gama realized that the European route of expeditions would be given a fair weight and access to travel and trade around the world. The shift of the trade route from land to sea is a brilliant example of the Europeans' way of thinking, implementing their plans that would leave a lasting legacy for years to come.

The development of this megacity resulted in the phenomenon of urbanization, which is visible everywhere and is a clear cut outcome of the expansion of power. When understanding the expansion and invasion of power, perspectives usually shift from the Portuguese, Marathas, Mughals and, lastly, the British. The process of invasion began with the Portuguese, followed by the Marathas and the Mughals in the seventeenth century, and concluded with the British. South Mumbai, now known as the city centre, was under British rule, while the rest of Mumbai was under Portuguese rule until the beginning of the eighteenth century, and then under the Marathas after 1739.

The Portuguese ruled the Northern Province for around 200 years. One of the noblemen, Garcia de Orta, was given a part of an island on lease in the south of Salsette from 1554 to 1570. He was a physician, herbalist and naturalist who primarily worked in the Northern and Southern provinces of Portuguese India. He built a manor house on the island, which was later torn down to construct Bombay Castle in the seventeenth century. This was the start of planning for the new town. The small defence structure was gradually surrounded by residential structures, primarily of the British.

In the early years of the eighteenth century, the flourishing town added elaborate fortification walls to protect itself. This fort left a deep impact on the history of Mumbai as, even today, the region is known as 'Fort', despite the fact that its fortification walls were demolished around 150 years ago. The city grew as a commercial centre, and was considered as a jewel in the sea.

Counter to the British, the rest of the region around Mumbai was under the control of the Marathas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They left a deep impression on the material culture and architectural language of the region. Some peculiar residential structures and temples were constructed at Sopara, Vasai, Kalyan, Alibaug and Chaul. The Maratha architecture becomes visible when Chimaji Appa Peshwa in 1739 fought at the Battle of Vasai and asserted dominance over the Portuguese. This led to the building of temples and the renaming of towns to help resettle the people who chose not to surrender to the Portuguese and the conversion they proposed. The other style of architecture seen during a similar timeframe is related to the residential houses of the Peshwa Sardars, which may be called vernacular architecture.

Figure 14 Gadre wada, Agashi, Virar

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These residential houses became popularly known as wadas. Wada architecture can also be seen at Madh, Agashi (Figure 14), Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Thane and Alibaug. At Anjur, which belongs to Anjurkar Naik today, we can see these grand, two-storey, timber heavy, decorated wadas with a veranda (an open platform inside the house) spread across to areas such as Kalyan, Bhiwandi and Panvel, among others. Wada is an indigenous architectural form seen on the Indian subcontinent. Usually, it has an open community space surrounded by residential rooms sharing a common veranda. The heavy woodwork in the construction alone has its emphasis on primary load-bearing structures, which include flooring of the upper storey, decorated brackets, load-bearing pillars on the veranda, and virtually the entire framework of the roof.

There are various reasons for the rise of Mumbai's port and the fall of older ports in the vicinity. The older ports have survived for more than 1,500 years and are now close to disappearing forever. Extensive deforestation in the region resulted in a high rate of siltation of the riverbeds. The riverine ports have suffered because of this siltation as well as the shifting of sand bars in the sea. The coastline shift has also contributed in its own way. The new vessels travelling in the sea were larger and made with new technology. Mumbai thus emerged as a significant port in the nineteenth century, and the Bombay Port Trust was established. The growth of docks was an essential, complementary development that resulted in the amplification of trade. This was possible due to monetary growth, which led to a boom in infrastructure of all kinds, more specifically the docks, such as Prince's Dock, Alexandra Dock (Indira Dock) and Merewether Dry Dock, which functioned as an addition to Prince's Dock.

The happenstance that led to the rise of Mumbai port also led to a shift of power from the northern and southern ports to Mumbai port. Ports such as Vasai, Chaul and Thane, which were primarily ruled over and managed by the Portuguese, thus experienced a change of power.

Business attracted the masses. A unique pattern of habitation among these contributors to the city's culture can be distinctly identified. Smaller settlements in the past, now part of the megacity, have identified themselves by their religious and communal identity, maintaining the exclusivity of their architectural language and art form, in addition to their intangible cultural traditions. The older settlements, now identified as Gaothan, are a unique form of the cultural identity of Mumbai. Khotachi Wadi, Chimbai, Chuim, Ranvar, hamlets of fisherfolk known as Koli Wada, have maintained their identity in this metropolitan city. These places still have houses that date back to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A very distinctive feature that typically arises when there is a rise of urban centres or an assimilation of power in smaller regions is the recognition of community and the traits and traces that lead to it. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region, which extends to Thane, Kalyan and Chaul, has its own distinction markers of community, whether through art, architecture or the communities themselves. The social fabric of Mumbai is the result of the waves of migrations over the centuries. Indeed, its urban history of 2,300 years has rendered it complex. Migrants primarily travelled on trade routes, and it was the trade that unified them. This diversity has been reflected in the architecture and monuments of the region. Residential and religious structures still reflect the legacy of migrants and their communal cultural identity.

The history of churches in Vasai, Mahim, Poinsur and Marol dates back to the Portuguese era and still has significance in certain areas. The forts of Bandra, Mahim and Thane define the scope by which the Portuguese took over this land and its wealth, and ruled over it with finesse. The colonial references to the Portuguese can also be seen at the Shaiva Caves of Mandapeshwar, where alterations had been made to the architecture, revealing the asserted dominance of the colonisers.

In a changing cultural landscape, the Muslim community settled in a particular pattern, known as a *mohalla*, which included houses of residence with intricate woodwork and balconies supported by distinctly designed railings. These architectural patterns can be seen in Kalyan, Bhiwandi and Muhammad Ali Road near Mumbai city centre.

The Jama Masjid mosque of Mumbai was completed in 1802 and is located in South Mumbai, where it reflects the city centre and the Islamic community, their worship and ritual place. The Jama Masjid is located between the bustling lanes of Dhobi Talao, near the area known to locals as Kalbadevi, and the Crawford market. It is built over a natural water pond with two very tall, standing minarets. The original Jama Masjid, however, was built in Dongri, an area close to the present day docks.

Apart from these local architectural patterns and art styles, the fort area of Mumbai serves as a living museum of various architectural styles that travelled from the various parts of the world to the city in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The list of architectural styles that predominate in the 'Fort' includes Neo-Classic (Figure 15), Victorian Gothic (Figure 16), Indo Saracenic and Art Deco (Figure 17). The British era also brought with it certain variations and combinations of architectural styles, which were designed by European architects, and patronized and constructed by locals. This synthesis of local crafts and local monetary supply is evidence of the economic prosperity as trade flourished, and with it, the rise of industrialization. This cluster of buildings, known as the 'Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai', was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2018. Some of the elements of these architectural styles, especially Art Deco, were adopted by local architects and can be seen in the suburbs of Mumbai. This adoption of styles continued until the late twentieth century.

Figure 15 Stain glass painting, Convocation Hall, University of Mumbai

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Figure 16 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

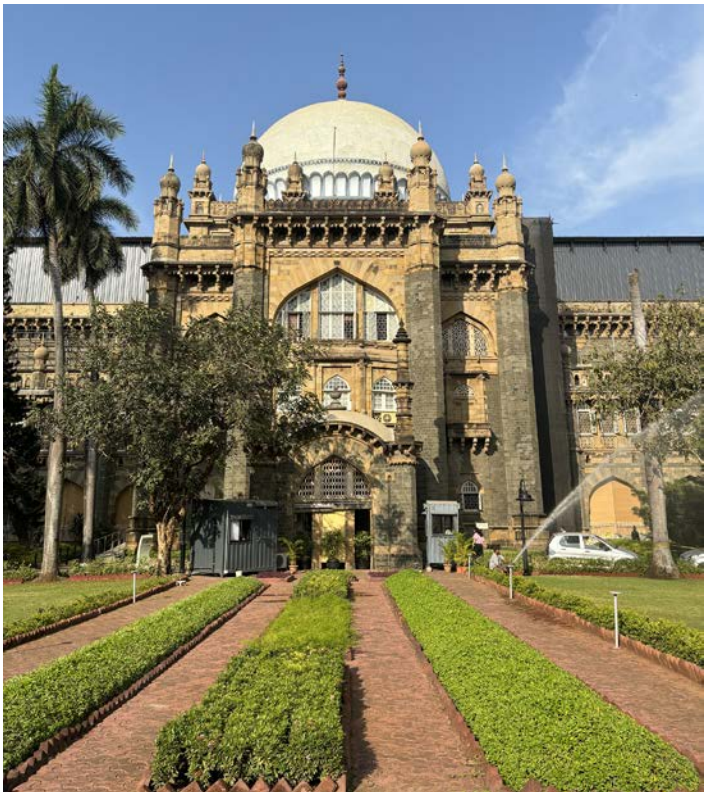

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Figure 17 Art Deco building, Churchgate

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Architectural styles can also be seen based on communities, such as Islamic, Parsi, Jewish and Chinese, in South Mumbai. For example, an *agiary*, famously known as a fire temple, is associated with the Parsi community and is a place where the Parsis worship fire. Every *agiary* has a significant marker of recognition, that is, the symbol of Zoroaster, the god of the Parsis. Maneckji Seth Agiary is one of the oldest *agiary*, constructed in 1735. The architecture of the building is an amalgamation of Persian and Greek Revival styles, flanked by two Lamassus (a celestial being) standing guard at the entrance.

In addition to the effects of trade, the cotton industry has also left a deep impact on the culture of the city. The year 1853 saw the establishment of a textile mill, which later brought a different perspective to Bombay, that is, industrialization. An area in South Bombay, Girgaon, was an important region for the installation of mills. This was a way to reach out and to establish political and social cohesion within the working class. Apart from the mill chimneys, the architectural features of the mills are best described as a basic two/three storey structure with arched windows and roofs, which were conical in structure. This was the new skyline of the then new city. The rise of mills coincided with the residential architecture of chawls, which were places of residence for migrant workers of the cotton mill who had not necessarily inherited bulk money (Figure 18). These matchbox-like single or double room dwellings were built in high concentration and were connected to each other, mostly by a common corridor. The social and economic synthesis of this architecture was turned into a culture called 'chawl' culture, which is one of the characteristic socio-cultural features of modern Mumbai. Some examples of chawls are famously under the responsibility of the Bombay Development Directorate (BDD) and the Bombay Improvement Trust (BIT), and are located in the neighbourhoods of Sewri, Byculla, Dadar, Girgaon and Parel, that is, the same areas where the mills were once in vogue.

Figure 18 Chawls of Mumbai

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This evolution of trade and modern technology was important to the city as it gave rise to institutions like the BDD and the BIT, which played a key role in town planning and town development. The cotton industry earned a fortune for the owners of the mills, which was part of the international trade circuit. India was known for its export of good quality cloth in Indo-Roman trade, with the rise of the cotton industry completing the circle of time. Interestingly, these were the old trade routes and the old export items, which were now making history with the new traders.

The megacity of Mumbai can be culturally described as 'cities within a city'. Every facet of the city is a different world within itself. The city centre, i.e. the 'Fort', is a live museum of world culture and a representative of global culture. Older settlements assimilated in the city have maintained their folk cultural identity. The megacity of Mumbai houses numerous aboriginal settlements in Sanjay Gandhi National Park, which falls under the city limits. These three extremes do not contradict one another and are culturally complementary. Each of these types of 'city' within Mumbai represents a segment of its history frozen in time.

Some aspects defining the nature of the city are evidently intertwined with the centre of a culture and the core of a community. Whether this be due to the functionality of a community, the progression of urbanism, the scope of architecture, or the visual treat of the distinct monuments, these aspects are what defines Mumbai, which is also why it is called the city of dreams and a welcoming home for all immigrants. The dynamism that led to the change of trajectories in Mumbai was due to its persistent history with the ocean. The profound contact with the sea was, to some degree, maintained by the ruling authorities of the time, acting as turning points in the history of the city. Mumbai was and will always be an integral part of the Silk Roads, which had worked well, hand in hand with the multiple layers of urbanization. The port and the city of Mumbai have always been the place where ideas, cultures and communities collide in an environment that led to the proliferation of the city, a place that yielded the roots of urbanism.

The growth of Mumbai perfectly resonates with the Fibonacci sequence, where the centre of the urban city and the growth of the main port led to the expansion of smaller ports and cities. Over time, to the present day, these aspects, which have always been part of Mumbai, have been brought back to its centre. Thus, when it is said that Mumbai defines the traces of an urban city, it is only appropriate to say that this a city which is – and has always been – home to multiplicities.

Conclusion

Mumbai in the twenty-first century accounts for slightly more than six per cent of the Indian economy. This is a legacy of the more than 2,000-year urban history of the city. Townships here emerged from offshoots of the Silk Roads, flourishing on the surplus produced, and benefitting from interactions with migrants from around the world. There are five peaks of urbanization on the graph of economic development, as reflected in the monumental architecture and art in the region.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region is home to 226 caves, 52 forts, 3 World Heritage sites and hundreds of locations, where the history of cultural interactions on the Silk Roads, in parts, is narrated by scattered sculptural and architectural fragments. Each phase of urban development has left a monumental mark on the city, with each phase tracing its own city centre, as it shifted from Sopara, Elephanta, Thane, Vasai and then Fort.

The city culture is shaped by migrants, who settled in search of fortune and dreams. The prosperity enjoyed by the city and its dwellers was an outcome of the affluent trade along the Silk Roads. Communities across the Old World travelled to Mumbai and contributed to the city in their own way. The city was the centre of industrial and art products, which were exported to the world. The network of land routes met the sea here at Mumbai. Early riverine ports played an important role in the development of the city, though gradual changes in shipbuilding technology, as well as some natural reasons, meant that these ports eventually vanished from the map. Gradually, trade from these riverine ports shifted to the natural port now known as Mumbai. The older trade routes are still being used in their new form, that is, highways constructed with modern technology, though their path and spirit remain the same.

Architecture and monuments in the region, built over the centuries, narrate the history of the interactions of this city with the world along the Silk Roads. They stand for the exchange of ideas, at the point where two cultures converge. The city is known for three World Heritage sites: Elephanta Caves, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (Figure 19), and the Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai. The Elephanta Caves is a masterpiece dating back to the sixth century CE, expressing Indian aesthetics through the narrative panels. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus is an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture, blended with themes derived from traditional Indian architecture.

Figure 19 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Mumbai

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The ambitious city planning projects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries left their imprint in the form of Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai, a cluster of both public and residential buildings. Many such examples make the city a living museum, showcasing the various architectural styles that travelled along the trade routes over time.

Mumbai is an example of cities within a city, evolving and accommodating every class and creed. The city lived five lives, rejuvenating with every wave of urbanization. This jewel bloomed where the land met the sea on the Silk Roads.

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Chapter 7

Sohar to Dhofar

Urbanization in Oman

By Peter Webb

For the transregional trading networks that connected China, India and the Middle East over the past 2,000 years, Oman was the facilitator, the nodal point that enabled the connection to happen. The vast expanses of ocean between Iraq and China were too great and too long for premodern ships to cover by direct sailing and, without stopping points for water and supplies, long-distance trade would have been impossible. The month-long crossing of the open sea between Arabia and India was particularly challenging, and it was to Oman – the furthest shore of Arabia in the direction of India – where sailors looked for water to load their ships before venturing out, or to quench their parched throats coming in. Patterns of urbanization in Oman responded to the needs of merchant sailors and, as soon as long-distance maritime trading networks were established in the second century BCE, Omani ports became key conduits for the seasonal patterns of ships plying the monsoon winds across continents. Over the centuries, Omani towns grew as they converted their geographically favourable position into becoming emporia for world trade and, eventually, the seat of maritime empires in control of the trading networks themselves.

For the past 2,000 years, Oman's major urban settlements have looked outwards to the sea. Geography has made this so. Much of Oman's interior is composed of sandy deserts, many with dense ridges of high dunes which inhibit crossing – the kind of terrain that Bedouin do their best to avoid. While there are some habitable deserts, where camel-herding nomads can pasture, Oman's land access to the rest of Arabia is constricted by the sandy desolation of the Empty Quarter, known in Arabic as *al-Aḥqāf*, the 'land of rolling dunes', and only a thin stretch of more benevolent desert near Oman's present borders with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) enable a corridor of connection to the rest of Arabia. But mountains conspire against this trading route as well. Oman is ringed across its northern and southern territory by tall, jagged peaks with few passes, and only one track near Sohar connects with what is now the eastern UAE (Figure 1). The general difficulties in crossing Oman's mountains have meant that peoples on one side of the ridges can live quite apart and be remarkably independent from populations on the other side.

Figure 1 Jabal al-Akhḍar in the Ḥajar Mountains of Northern Oman

© Peter Webb.

Between desert and cliffs, long-distance caravan routes through the land of Oman were arduous to establish. Thus, while Oman is geographically part of Arabia, it was not easy to maintain close connections with the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. This leaves Oman's coast: a narrow strip of land between the mountains and sea where felicitously-placed sandbanks, lagoons and bays enabled locals to construct safe harbours and utilize the sea to explore connections with other peoples. Muscat is, after all, nearer Karachi than to Riyadh, and while very challenging deserts stand in the way of a would-be traveller into Arabia from Muscat, favourable sea breezes and monsoon patterns make the India-Oman journey reliably smooth sailing.

Across history, the principal drivers behind Oman's urbanization are therefore to be found as a result of maritime trade. Of necessity, the coastal settlements needed friendly relations with populations in the mountainous and desert hinterlands and, in certain periods, rulers from behind the mountains unified tracts of the coast into cohesive political entities, but land empires in Oman are the historical exception, not the norm. Wealth was more usually concentrated in the port cities with their connections spreading outwards onto the sea lanes across the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean that emmeshed Oman's coastal centres in networks of mercantile populations linked to Iraq, Iran, Yemen, East Africa, India and beyond. The business in Omani cities was the transhipment of goods to richer markets beyond the seas, as well as some exports of more locally sourced aromatics, horses and pearls. It is the exchange occurring from shipping activities that inspired the architectural features and cultural connections that shaped Oman's urban civilizations.

Oman: its place and people

The term 'Oman' and the precise geographical place it specifies has shifted in meaning over the course of time. Today's nation state of Oman is oriented predominantly on a north-south axis, occupying the whole eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, essentially covering all the territory that borders the Arabian Sea. In premodern times, however, 'Oman' referred to an east-west oriented geographical region, which encompassed just the northern part of today's Omani state and the territory which is now the eastern and northern parts of the UAE. For medieval writers, 'Oman' meant the coastal cities that look out onto the gulf that connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz and the southern shore of the eastern part of the Persian Gulf, along with the settlements in the mountains immediately behind that strip of coastline. The lands south of that strip, the vast deserts that form the centre of today's Oman, were so scarcely populated and infrequently travelled that they were not considered within the sphere of premodern Oman. As for the far south of today's Omani nation, the province of Dhofar, it was connected in premodern times to the networks of trade and political power that spanned the long southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Dhofar was much easier to reach by sea from Yemeni ports than it was overland from Oman, and up until the modern period, Dhofar was usually under some nominal control by states based in Yemen.

Today's Omani nation therefore contains an array of regions that were historically distinct, and a portion of the territory which used to constitute Oman is now part of the UAE. This chapter explores the broad area of Eastern Arabia as a whole: the traditional heartland of historic Oman of the northern coast (from the UAE to the Arabian Sea), and Dhofar, the far south of today's Oman, which was involved in its own networks of maritime trade and exhibits its unique architectural and cultural exchange too.

Though the northern and southern edges of Eastern Arabia were not previously united politically, their favourable outlets to the Indian Ocean opened them up to transregional maritime networks of mercantile and cultural exchange, and both regions have important stories to tell.

Oman and Dhofar's historic significance stems from the combination of their geographical position and the occurrence of annual monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean. Both the northern and southern shores of Eastern Arabia catch the south-west monsoon winds, which can transport boats with relative ease straight across the Indian Ocean in about one month of sailing. From India's western shores, the ships can continue towards further legs of the journey around Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Sumatra and Java. From there, the ports of southern China are but one further leg of sailing away, though the precise route and time taken was dependent on particular monsoon winds. For the return to Oman, boats would also use the monsoon winds in the winter, meaning a round trip of trade from the Middle East to Southeast Asia and back again could be completed by Omani sailors within one year. Ships that did not originate in Oman would still need to stop at its harbours as its ports offered the last opportunity to take on water before venturing into the Indian Ocean. Oman's coast was effectively a natural gateway for all Indian Ocean trade to the Middle East.

The northern coast of historic Oman was also well placed to benefit from the patterns of urbanization following the spread of Islam from the seventh century CE onwards. As the Muslim Caliphate established itself across the Middle East, many of its most important cities were constructed in Iraq and Iran, concentrating a tremendous wealth and demand for luxury goods in markets connected to the western edge of the Persian Gulf. As Islamic civilization developed, ships plying the seas to India and China continued to increase. Maritime trade via the Persian Gulf satisfied the vast demand for ceramics, aromatics, silks and other wares such as Chinese lacquer, becoming a lucrative business. The northern coast of Oman was the natural channel for this trade. Not only was Oman directly on the sea passage between India and Mesopotamia, but it also seems that Oman was a necessary transhipment hub. Hourani's *Arab Seafaring* (1995) reports that in the premodern period, vessels suited to Indian Ocean seafaring were different from the boats that could best navigate the shallows of the Persian Gulf and, if this was indeed the case, the northern Omani ports were well located for the transfer of goods between ships.

For long-distance maritime traders, the harbours of Oman's northern coast were obvious stopping points, but those traders could also have availed themselves of ports on the opposite side of the Strait as well. Such ports lay in the territory of present-day Iran where precisely the same patterns of shipping and monsoon winds applied. Hence, for ship captains over the centuries, there was no fundamental difference between the harbours on either the Omani or the Iranian sides of the Strait as both were conduits to the same Middle Eastern markets and both could supply freshwater. Competition could therefore have emerged between the ports of Oman and Iran, but geopolitics did not quite play out as a rivalry across the Strait.

Like the situation in Oman, the mountainous Iranian coastline around the Strait of Hormuz separates its coastal cities from the usual heartlands of Iranian empires, and rulers in Shiraz, Isfahan or Tehran often found it difficult to maintain continuous and effective control over the southern coast. The highly lucrative node of trade on both sides of the Strait of Hormuz therefore did not experience interference from land-based empires through much of history. Iranian and Iraqi-based states made periodic attempts to control the coast but, frequently, without significant long-term success, allowing the coastal towns on both sides to manage their own affairs. The span of history is not without conflict and attempts to unify both sides of the Strait, and patterns of trade and local political power, sometimes favoured one side of the straight over the other. However, for much of recorded time, the region enjoyed relative peace, with regular integration and negotiation between small-scale states and the harbour towns.

As a result of the macro political trends that protected the Strait of Hormuz from most land-based empires, the region's demographics were complex and cosmopolitan. The coastal towns operated within a broad network of Indian Ocean mobility, and peoples moved freely on both sides of the Strait, which resulted in mixed populations who absorbed influences from afar. Neither strictly 'Iranian' or 'Arab', the coastal towns had hybrid identities for much of their history, which were fashioned more on the trends of the maritime networks than the lifestyles of the land-based communities of the interior. The towns of Oman's northern coast melded Arabian, Mesopotamian, Iranian and other influences, and the southern coast also had the added proximity of Yemen to shape its cultural production. The ways in which the hybrid cultures of the coasts expressed themselves in material and architectural forms is the subject of this chapter.

Effusive trade but elusive material culture

Seaborne merchants learned to navigate the monsoons of the Indian Ocean in the later centuries BCE, and coastal sites in Oman were serving those links more than 2,000 years ago. Oman's trade with India must have continued ever since; archaeologists have uncovered Indian-made ceramics in Omani ports dating to the first centuries CE, and Arabic texts from the medieval era attest to the major influx of foodstuffs such as rice from India to Oman. Maritime trade with China would have also started to develop in the first century CE when conflicts between Rome and the Parthian Empire in Iran and Mesopotamia blocked the easy movement of land caravans. Transport of Chinese goods took to the seas, and ships established routes to Mediterranean markets either through sailing up the Red Sea or by unloading their cargo on the Persian Gulf, handing over their goods to camel caravans that crossed Arabia. Either way, after their month-long crossing of the Indian Ocean, the merchant ships had to call at Eastern Arabian ports for water. Yet, despite all the shipping activity that would have passed through Oman, the settlement patterns of the region were intriguingly ephemeral.

Few sites in Eastern Arabia were continuously occupied for the entire sweep of history, and very few developed sizeable urban areas, especially before the fourteenth century CE. The location of ports also shifted over time, both along the Omani coast and across the Strait of Hormuz. This was because the natural harbours created by sandbars, bays and lagoons are prone to silting, but also because changing political circumstances ensured that no one town enjoyed a monopoly over trade nor an extended period of urban expansion for very long. Furthermore, Oman itself was not typically the main market for the most valuable long-distance goods, rather, it served as a conduit through the Persian Gulf to the ultimate goal: the rich markets in the urban centres of Iraq and Iran. We therefore need to ponder the extent to which Omani settlements profited from the luxury-laden ships that visited their shores. Did ships merely stop for water and perhaps transhipment into the Persian Gulf, or did the locals manage to tax the incoming goods and/or capitalize further by shipping them to more lucrative markets? The lack of powerful states on the Omani coast for much of history likely limited the harbours' ability to extract wealth from merchant vessels, and the surprisingly scant architectural remains of Oman's settlements, particularly from the early periods, prompts speculation that the ports were benevolent safe harbours for merchants whose merchandise was destined for elsewhere.

Literary texts provide evidence that some Omani merchants physically sailed to China on a regular basis and had links with the Iraqi markets in Basra, meaning that individual traders must have been very wealthy. However, we need to wonder whether the wealth was amassed on an individual level, sponsoring the construction of a few mansions, while – in contrast – the rulers of Omani settlements were less able to divert a share of the trading revenue into the public purse and, therefore, were less able to construct on a large scale (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Ruins at Old Hasik, including a mosque and cemetery in Dhofar Province, Oman

© Peter Webb.

The extent of urban development in Oman, and the resources needed to construct grand architectural edifices, relied on local capabilities and opportunities to convert the shipping traffic into revenue.

The history of urban settlement in Oman is therefore one of flux, both in terms of location of the cities and their fortunes. For example, Muscat, the present capital, is mentioned in medieval texts, but it appears not to have been a significant port until the sixteenth century when the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean and developed Muscat to rival and displace the other local ports. The Portuguese held sway for over a century and their efforts did bend trade towards Muscat, so much so that when the Portuguese were displaced, the newly-triumphant Omani rulers opted for Muscat as the seat of their own power. However, the Omani Dynasty soon split thereafter, with the more vigorous and prosperous branch based in Zanzibar during the mid-nineteenth century, relegating Muscat once again to a period of relatively modest means until the modern Omani state again sponsored Muscat as the national capital from 1970. In the previous centuries, port cities such as Qalhat to the east of Muscat, or Sohar and Julfar, farther to the west, had been much bigger and more important centres of commerce and politics. However, each of those cities had their own staccato history of urbanization, and by the time of Muscat's early development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the other centres had either fallen into decline or ceased to exist altogether (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Ruins at Qalhat (thirteenth to fifteenth century CE)

© Peter Webb.

Overall, little remains to attest to the two-millennia of Oman's key position in Indian Ocean trade. The warehouses, shipyards, captains' houses and merchants' mansions constructed from mudbrick, coral and the local adobe-style mortar (known as *ṣārūj*) have now almost all disappeared. While archaeology is currently uncovering the outlines of some former trading hubs, much of what had existed lies buried beneath the expansive urban development of today's Oman.

With only rare exceptions, the earliest of the large standing monuments in Oman date from the late seventeenth century when a vigorous dynasty from the mountainous interior established control over the entirety of the northern coast and constructed imposing fortresses and citadels to guard access to their ports and strongholds. As for the preceding two millennia, we know that monsoon winds brought countless sailors with merchandise from every port, from China through to Indonesia and India onto Oman's shores, yet only the tiniest fragments of the Oman they knew survive to this today. This chapter proceeds chronologically, uncovering the evidence to reveal the cosmopolitan connections of Oman's historical architectural fabric.

Oman in the early period of trans-Asiatic trade (100 BCE–600 CE)

Omani maritime connections with Eastern Iranian shores and onwards to India were likely already progressing more than four millennia ago. Fragments of Persian pottery from ca. 3500–3000 BCE have been excavated on the eastern coast of Oman but, in the earliest period, sailors would have hugged the shores of what is today the Iranian and Pakistani coastline, keeping land in sight and stopping at intermediate ports while risking the perils of piracy. Security would have been a major concern, as no large imperial navies patrolled those coasts, and some (perhaps many) opportunistic local communities and gangs would have found that raiding passing ships was more profitable than trading. The route straight across the Indian Ocean would have been much safer as pirates lacked the technology to venture so far from their local shores, and the ocean route would also have been faster as it could follow the monsoon winds. But this maritime highway was slower to develop since it required the ships' captains to trust their knowledge of the stars and monsoons to take them far from any sight of land or landmarks as they headed straight into the vast open sea towards India. These bold steps into the middle of the ocean only developed into a common route about 2,000 years ago, and maritime trade flourished as a result, but the nature and architecture of Oman's urban settlements at this juncture is unclear.

No extant standing structures attest to the early harbours in northern Oman, and geographical texts do not provide sufficient detail of the names and locations of ports to facilitate any specific identification. However, thanks to archaeological excavation, one port from this early period at Sohar has been identified, situated at the head of the northern sweep of Oman's coastline towards the Strait of Hormuz. Sohar was first developed around the first or second century CE, and it still remains a port today. It is one of the few urban centres to have enjoyed occupation throughout the past 2,000 years, though its importance fluctuated considerably and there seems to have been a few periods of relative abandonment. Sohar is a natural port thanks to a lengthy strip of sand surrounded by lagoons, which makes for safe harbours, but the site is difficult to spot from the sea: the ultimate cause of Sohar's longevity as an urban centre is the 500-metre tall solitary limestone peak that sits a few kilometres inland, offering a conspicuous landmark for sailors at sea and keeping Sohar town in business.

What that business entailed, however, is hard to visualize since the earliest Sohar is buried underneath today's Sohar. Archaeological soundings have discovered Indian ceramics dating from the first to third centuries CE, a clear testament to long-distance maritime exchange at an early period, but no substantive structures survive to shed light on architectural exchanges. The identity of the city's first inhabitants and the nature of their connection to the wider world is lost but for conjecture based on a small quantity of broken pottery, coins and fragmentary outlines of dwellings.

More substantial finds – from what was likely the main port of Oman in the early period – are at the site of al-Dur (Ed-Dur) situated in the Umm Quwayn Emirate of today's UAE. Al-Dur, which flourished from ca. 100 BCE to 200 CE, lies slightly south of the Strait of Hormuz on the Persian Gulf at the westernmost extremity of the premodern definition of Oman. It was closely connected to a conglomeration of agricultural and iron-producing communities in the nearby hills around present-day Meliha and, together, these sites constitute the most urbanized area at the beginning of the Common Era in the entire region. Given the lack of comparable, sizeable sites in eastern Arabia in this era, al-Dur may in fact be the town known by Greek and Roman geographers as 'Omana', an emporium for pearls, purple dye, silks, wine, gold, and many local dates. Material finds reveal that al-Dur certainly was a conduit for the transhipment of Indian and Chinese goods into the Middle East from 100 BCE to 100 CE.

Al-Dur's urban settlement has survived only as fragments of several rock- and coral-constructed buildings and now-empty spaces within the town, which formerly housed modest dwellings constructed of palm fronds. These building materials are typical of the Persian Gulf region, but the scant survival of the buildings precludes more detailed conclusions about the architectural influence brought about by the trading ships which moored at its harbour. The most prominent edifice of al-Dur that survives lies in the remains of a rectangular temple, with plastered external walls and entrances adorned in geometric decoration; it appears to have been dedicated to sun worship, as attested by a fragmentary Aramaic inscription and the remains of a pit used for fire rituals. Architecturally, little more can be adduced, but the ceramics and coins found on the site indicate steady connections with Parthian-era Iran and Mesopotamia. Roman and Nabataean coins also suggest that the goods shipped to al-Dur by sea from India and beyond were offloaded and transferred by camelback caravans, which plied the overland route through northern Arabia to reach the Mediterranean. However, the greater volumes of material related to the Parthian Empire indicates that the city was primarily oriented towards Mesopotamia and absorbed most cultural influences from the Persianate world.

Al-Dur's location on the Persian Gulf shore of today's UAE, and not on the ocean-facing Arabian Sea coastline of today's Oman, is a likely testament to the logistical challenges with which Oman's mountains confronted would-be traders.

Given that the lucrative markets for exotic wares were in the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, it is logical that merchant sailors would desire to bring their goods as close to market as possible and, given the difficulties of crossing the mountains between the Arabian Sea coast and the hinterland of Arabia, it is little surprise that the merchants preferred to go around the Strait of Hormuz by boat and seek a harbour on the farther side of the mountains. From al-Dur, no further mountains impeded the movement of goods: they could be loaded onto caravans bound for the inland Arabian trading kingdom at Thaj, from where they would be transported further across northern Arabia and into Syria and the Mediterranean where Roman buyers would be waiting. Cities in what is today's Oman could not enjoy such direct access to Thaj due to the difficult passes through the mountains, which would have likely slowed the pace of urbanization on Arabia's far eastern seaboard.

The finds at al-Dur, together with an abiding lack of comparable urban centres on the eastern part of Oman's shore, indicate that the Persian Gulf trade during the Roman era had a considerable land-based component. Ships arriving from across the Indian Ocean took harbour beyond Oman's mountains, directly connecting to desert caravan routes which then completed the northern Arabian journey overland. Archaeological finds from the caravan cities of Thaj, Hatra, Petra and Palmyra further afield, reveal that they were much richer urban settlements than al-Dur, Sohar and the rest of Eastern Arabia in this era. These inland caravan cities have more elaborate architecture, opulently emulating the Roman and Parthian styles. It would therefore appear that the closer proximity of the land-caravan centres to the ultimate markets of the luxury goods generated significantly more wealth than the harbours in Eastern Arabia which first greeted the goods before their transhipment. The economic reality was that the land-based caravan centres controlled access to markets and monopolized the wealth, and this likely explains why there was only limited urbanization in Oman in the early centuries CE.

It also appears that the Omani towns suffered material decline in the third century CE. Al-Dur was largely abandoned after 200 CE. A fort occupied by the Sasanians at Meliha was similarly abandoned by 300, and finds from Sohar also taper off, suggesting a similar decline. It may also be the case that sailors grew more confident about reaching the Mediterranean via the Red Sea, which meant that commercial networks could avoid the extra steps of offloading in Oman and organizing camel caravans across such large stretches of Northern Arabia. In support of this notion, the caravan cities on the routes through Mesopotamia, such as Palmyra and Hatra, which had been the key nodes for conveying goods towards the Mediterranean in previous centuries, also fell into decline in the late third century CE. Scholars debate the reasons behind the lack of urban remains in Oman between 300–600 CE; whatever the case, it is the most silent moment in Oman's archaeological record.

One extant monument stands as an exception. It is a fortress at al-Fulayj, set inland 30 km to the south of Sohar. Constructed in the late fifth century CE, the fort is a square, a regularly planned and defended stone-built fortification with projecting corner towers.

Since its area is only 30 m^2, it was too small to serve as a major garrison, and its excavators suggest that it served as a regional observation base to keep guard on the mountains and protect the coastal plain. Thus, a larger military camp and, perhaps, a series of other such observation posts remains to be found. At present, what is clear is that the fort was not constructed by locals but by the army of the Sasanian Empire from Iran. The fort's corner towers and the narrow entrance flanked by buttress towers resemble Sasanian fortresses on their northern frontier in the Caspian region, for example, the fort at Pānkān in northern Iraq, thereby demonstrating the architectural arrival that accompanied political expansion from Iran. Later, Arabic literature recorded a handful of campaigns that were launched by the Sasanians to control the harbours on both sides of the Strait of Hormuz and, although these accounts are problematic, as there does not appear to have been any major bustling or wealthy ports in the region for the Sasanians to control at the time, the evidence of the fort at al-Fulayj proves that the Sasanian army was present at least for a period before Islam.

In sum, urban settlement in Oman during the early centuries CE, when trading networks were established across the Indian Ocean, is limited. Archaeologists can point to evidence of connection to Iran and India via fragments of ceramics, but the number of sizeable towns was small. The region's main port was at al-Dur, not facing the Arabian Sea and not in the territory of present-day Oman, it was instead situated on the Persian Gulf for caravan routes through Arabia. Aside from activity in Sohar in the first and second centuries CE, there does not seem to have been any large settlement with significant merchant exchange on Arabia's eastern seaboard. The remains of a Sasanian military presence at al-Fulayj are tantalizing indicators that the north was more intimately involved in maritime trade and Persian culture than we are currently able to determine, as clearer conclusions are hard to draw at present. The name 'Oman' is at least sufficiently documented in literary sources from this period as a known transhipment point, but its main port was on the Persian Gulf and its cultural connections point most obviously towards Iran. Influence came via trade with the northern ports of Hormuz, with the Persian-controlled Iraq, and – at least for part of the Sasanian period – actual territorial control by the Persian military over pockets of the coast.

Early Islam (630–1200 CE)

The fortunes of the harbours on Oman's northern coast were transformed thanks to events flowing from the rise of Islam in the mid-seventh century CE. The caliphs did not directly build in Oman, but their interest in developing Iraq and the great prosperity that soon followed created a new demand and commercial energy at the head of the Persian Gulf, which the northern Omani ports were ideally placed to assist. Populations from Oman's coast participated in the early Muslim conquests, using their connections in southern Iran to help secure both sides of the Strait of Hormuz and southern Iran for the caliphate.

Many of these Omanis were settled in the great Iraqi port city of Basra, and other groups of Omani sailors, prompted by the promise of sure profits in Iraqi markets, ventured ever further and also to the East, establishing trading communities on the coast of China by the late eighth century. It is in the eighth and ninth centuries that the archaeological record across the northern coast of Oman begins to present evidence of trading activity and urban settlement, though, once again, concrete indicators of cultural exchange and architecture are elusive.

From Arabic literary sources it is clear that the trading opportunities and the active role of Omanis in Basra, the Persian Gulf and beyond reinvigorated the harbour at Sohar. It must have been a hub for trade by the eighth and ninth centuries CE, growing to 73 hectares by the tenth century when it was the largest settlement in Oman, as evidenced by Arabic geographical texts from the ninth and tenth centuries. However, most of early Islamic-era Sohar is buried beneath the modern city, and while soundings reveal the presence of Chinese and Indian pottery from this period, no major architectural structures survive. More detailed archaeological surveys in the hinterland of Sohar did uncover an extensive network of wells and systems of irrigation canals (Arabic: *falaj*) in the ninth and tenth centuries, evidencing the development of an agricultural hinterland to support the town on the coast; this confirms the literary accounts of Sohar's growth in early Islam to serve Abbasid-era Iraq's demand for overseas luxury items. One *falaj* canal also seems to have been designed to serve the one mountain pass that connects Sohar to what is now the UAE, indicative of the increased economic activity and the maintenance of wider networks of communication. This land route is also attested in literary sources, but it was not an easy route and, by the medieval period, travellers' accounts indicate that it was hardly in use. The mountains, as per usual, conspired against the connection of Oman with the rest of Arabia, but Sohar must have made up for this in the volume of its maritime traffic – unfortunately, little survives to reveal itself today.

Contemporary with Sohar's expansion, the name of Muscat first clearly emerges in literary sources during the early centuries of Islam. Like the pattern of so many Omani settlements, there are no surviving monuments of early-Islamic Muscat, though it is unlikely that a large-scale town was established on the site, from which we could expect significant architectural monuments. Arabic texts do not laud Muscat for its size or splendour, instead, it was famed as the last watering place for ships bound for India and Yemen. It was a vital link in maritime trade, allowing sailors to replenish their supplies before setting off for up to one month into the depths of the Indian Ocean, but Muscat itself was so distant from the usual markets for luxury goods that there would be little sense in developing it as a trading centre. We can imagine that a cluster of buildings of coral stone and palm-frond construction, a modest market for foodstuffs, a reliable network of water infrastructure (*falaj* channels through the mountains and cisterns), and perhaps some fortification towers constituted the Muscat known to sailors of early Islam.

Muslim-era Omanis also rejuvenated activities on the Persian Gulf side of the Omani coast (now in the UAE) by expanding a harbour at Julfar. Approximately 70 km to the north of the then-abandoned port at al-Dur, Julfar is attested in Arabic literary sources as having been one of the principal political centres of early Islamic Oman, yet there are scarcely any remains today. The site seems securely identified as the ruins uncovered in an area known today as Kush, just north of Ras al-Khaimah, in the UAE. The earliest traces of settlement at this site, which date to the fifth or sixth century CE, accord with the fact that Arabic literature describes Julfar as having already been founded before Islam. The expansion of the site into a more sizeable settlement in early Islam is attested by the large numbers of pottery sheds, including a sizable group of high-quality glazed ceramics from China, as well as pottery from India. The Chinese wares only began to appear in significant numbers from the tenth century CE, though this does not mean that Julfar was not involved in earlier trade with China, since the Chinese began to produce increasing volumes of ceramics for export only in the ninth century. Before this period, China was a major exporter of silk and lacquer, and such materials do not survive in the archaeological record. The Indian pottery, found consistently in early-Islamic and medieval periods, is not high-quality, and archaeologists surmise that they were utensils carried by Indian merchants and sailors who took residence in Julfar (and Sohar, where similar finds have also been discovered). Presumably, they may have constructed dwellings inspired by the Indian architecture of their homelands (as is evidenced in more recent periods of Indian traders in Arabia and Zanzibar), yet the lack of surviving vernacular architecture leaves this to conjecture.

One hundred and twenty kilometres down the Persian Gulf coast from Julfar, and amidst today's urban metropole of Dubai, is the site of Jumeirah, founded in the ninth century and likely the most westerly settlement of the area known in premodern times as Oman. The original name of this city is not clear, but its reach was substantial: its architecture consisted of buildings constructed from courses of small stones, some of which were replete with columns and intriguing stucco decoration on the doors and windows. The town had a palace, a modest mosque, and what appears to be a rectangular caravanserai. There is also an abundance of open space in the site, likely the location of palm-frond huts, of which nothing survives today. Because few of the stone ruins stand more than one metre high, the nature of architectural exchange is not immediately obvious, but the high-quality pottery found on the site evidences of extensive connections with Iraq, India and China.

The settlement at Jumeirah is datable as contemporary with the prosperity of Sohar. We can clearly see a network whereby harbours on the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf side of Oman began to emerge and were engaged in regular long-distance trade. Literary sources indicate that the passage of ships through Omani ports from Sohar to Muscat was brisk in early Islamic times such that the geographer, al-Muqaddasi (d. 911), called Sohar the "entryway to China" (*dahlīz al-ṣīn*).

However, by the twelfth century, the geographer and cartographer al-Idrīsī (d. 1166) remarked on the collapse in China-bound trade due to political insecurities in the Gulf, and the fourteenth-century historian, Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqi (d. 1326), offered a cryptic indication that Sohar had declined very considerably. Throughout the medieval period, the Omani towns were in competition for business with ports on the Iranian side of the Gulf, notably Siraf, and hence the fortunes and possibilities for architectural flourish for Omani cities was in flux. The ceramics reveal that some luxury items shipped towards the Persian Gulf from South and East Asia were purchased and circulated among the wealthy of the Omani coast, but their cities did not obviously emulate the high-style decoration and architectural forms favoured at the major palaces and religious monuments of the central Islamic lands in this time. The opulent and grand architectural features of Baghdad, Samarra, Isfahan, Cairo and the other capitals – the ultimate destinations of the luxury goods traded through Oman – are of a different order than those that can be reconstructed from the remains of the contemporaneous architecture of the Omani harbours across the first 500 years of Islamic history (from the seventh to the twelfth century CE).

Medieval Dhofar

Contemporary with the brisk uptick in Persian Gulf trade during the Islamic period, which enabled settlements on the northern coast of Oman to expand, the far south of today's Oman (present-day Dhofar province) also witnessed a contemporaneous urban development through its integration into the network of ports on the coast of South Arabia. South Arabia was the home of frankincense and myrrh, shipping vast quantities in Antiquity up the Red Sea and by caravan route, tracking through western Arabia to the Mediterranean. The major archaeological site at Sumhuram (Khor Ruwi) in the Dhofar province was a conduit for this frankincense trade, though it was abandoned before 200 CE. In the Islamic period, Chinese markets were increasingly keen to acquire Arabian aromatics, in part on account of the significant spread of Buddhist rituals in China from the sixth and seventh centuries onwards, and new ports in South Arabia emerged to facilitate this trade, most notably the city of Dhofar near Salalah in southern Oman.

The precise location of the premodern town of Dhofar is convoluted. In the ninth and tenth centuries the settlement known as 'Dhofar' (*Ẓafār*) in Arabic sources may have been slightly inland at a presently unexcavated site located under a twentieth-century royal palace belonging to Oman's current dynasty. Over the years, and two regime changes in the thirteenth century, the city of Dhofar moved and, by 1200, it was right upon the sea, as revealed by the rich archaeological site discovered at al-Balid located to the east of today's Salalah. Excavations at al-Balid uncovered a veritable urban settlement: 1.6 km long and 800 m wide, constructed between the sea and a lagoon-formed inland waterway that encircled the town. These dimensions are essentially as large as Sohar at its peak, thus, al-Balid represents the remains of the main medieval port of southeast Arabia.

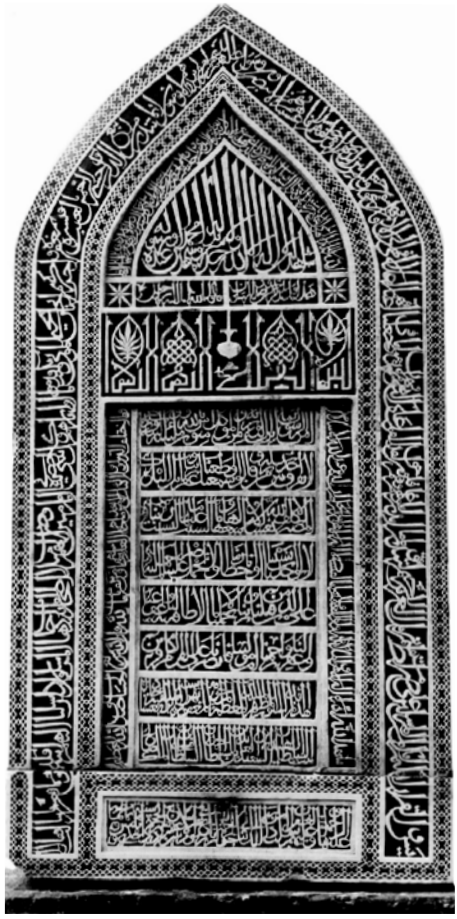
The town had a very large central mosque measuring 40 x 48.5 m, materially larger than any mosque remains so far uncovered in the early Muslim-era settlements of northern Oman. Al-Balid also had a multitude of smaller mosques (50 were reported in a medieval travellers account, and the partial excavation of the site has revealed many), as well as a palace citadel commanding the site. This city was abandoned between 1500–1600, likely as a consequence of the forcible reorganization of trading centres when the Portuguese established a maritime empire across the Indian Ocean. Over the succeeding centuries, much of al-Balid's stone construction was stripped away for vernacular dwellings for the local population, yet what remains still reveals a palpable grandeur when the city was at its height. The main Friday Mosque had a large columned (and likely arched) hall, carried by 144 pillars with octagonal capitals (Figure 4). The design typifies the hypostyle mosque layout with columned-hall found across the Muslim world, though the characteristics of the columns' height bears a good resemblance with the overall design of the main mosques of Sanaa and Zabid, revealing the Yemeni connections in the architectural fabric of medieval Dhofar. This is natural: the town was conquered in 1279 by lieutenants of the Rasulid Kingdom, which was based in western Yemen, and the previous regime that had ruled Dhofar in the early 1200s had hailed from eastern Yemen. We cannot be sure which regime constructed the main mosque at al-Balid but, either way, it was a Yemeni polity which sponsored the building. Nonetheless, the Dhofar mosque does differ from the usual pattern on account of its side doors: most mosques are entered via the wall opposite the direction of prayer, whereas the Dhofar Mosque has doors on all sides, which seems to have been a local innovation to provide a cross-breeze to combat the stifling temperatures and humidity from May to August.

Figure 4 The Friday Mosque in Dhofar

© Peter Webb.

The medieval civilization at Dhofar has also given us three lavish items of particular interest on the question of architectural exchange between East Arabia and the wider Indian Ocean. In the 1930s, British army officers purchased three elaborate tombstones that had been standing in a graveyard one kilometre or so inland from the site of al-Balid (Dhofar). One of the gravestones marks the tomb of a revered local religious figure, and the other two pieces were originally a pair, marking both ends of the grave of one of the Rasulid Yemeni rulers of Dhofar who died in 1311 (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Headstone commemorating a daughter of Sultan Zayn al-ʿAbidin, d. 1428



White marble, imported from Cambay in Gujarat.

© Leiden University Library, Legatum Warnerianum. Or.23.481, photograph 79.

The tombstones are remarkable, not only for their elegant and dense calligraphy that ranks high in the aesthetics of Muslim funerary carving of the time, but also because they are completely unlike any other tombstones from the region. The type of stone, the decorative patterns, the calligraphic style, and even the complexity of the texts selected for carving are manifestly different from the traditions seen elsewhere in eastern Arabia. Stylistic comparison reveals beyond doubt that these particular tombstones were imports from the city of Cambay in Gujarat. India's Gujarat region had been conquered by Muslim armies in 1300 and, immediately upon its integration into a Muslim sultanate, its local craftsmen were employed by patrons with a new faith, resulting in a felicitous merger of the Hindu carving traditions of vegetal and architectonic forms with a signature style of Arabic calligraphy developed by Muslim patrons in India. The three Cambay tombstones in Dhofar thus neatly encapsulate the possibilities of connectivity. Thanks to the maritime network, which linked Dhofar with the coast of Gujarat via a 3-4 week sailing journey, the Rasulid rulers in Dhofar in the early 1300s were up-to-date with the newest styles of carving that were just developing in India. The Dhofari Rasulids must have seen an example of the work, or had it described to them in detail, and they were sufficiently impressed to place an order.

Part of the dedicatory inscription of the ruler's marker was carved separately to the rest of the tombstone, suggesting that a nearly-complete Indian piece was purchased and then finished in Dhofar, but the religious figure's tombstone was completely carved in one place. This suggests that it must have been made to order in Gujarat, then shipped across the ocean to Dhofar to adorn the tomb, which became a site of local pilgrimage by the 1340s.

As portable objects, the tombstones were capable carriers of aesthetic taste and cultural production between geographical regions and across wide seas, but the same portability that enabled their long-distance import to Dhofar also facilitated their export. What must have been a much more considerable show of imported wealth has now been long removed from Dhofar's cemeteries, palaces and mansions. Nonetheless, the tombstones are a small window into a world of the long-distance exchange of high-value cultural objects, and the Rasulids – and their outpost in Dhofar – usher in a new flavour to our survey of Oman.

Prior to this period, whether on the northern or southern shores of the Arabian Sea, we have seen that archaeological sites yield little to suggest great opulence. The harbour cities certainly acquired some of the expensive goods that were being transhipped through them, but their rulers and residents did not appear to take major strides towards emulating the high style and architectural opulence of the towns in which the luxury goods were ultimately intended. Instead, their towns took the form of modest networks of coral, stone, mud-brick and/or palm-frond houses, a central mosque from which very little adornment is evidenced, and a fort, showing no evidence of the latest trends of palace building from Iraq or Iran. Other than Sohar, the expansion of agricultural hinterland was also limited in the Omani settlement patterns from 650–1200 CE. But the Rasulids and their building at Dhofar represent a shift. They were from Yemen but they actively conquered the southern shore of Eastern Arabia and forcibly incorporated Dhofar into a larger empire. In turn, their outpost in Dhofar acquired a more distinctive imperial style that seems to be a ramification of the growth of more assertive political entities in the region. The Rasulids had a greater network of exchange with Egypt, Syria and the wider Middle East because of their control of Red Sea ports. Their interest in conquering Dhofar in 1279 was part of an attempt to control all of southeast Arabia in order to link their harbours in western Yemen with outlets on the Indian Ocean. This was a regime which had the power to tax ships and distribute wealth between the important urban centres. While only a narrow window into the architectural spaces of their world is open for us to see at the ruins of Dhofar today, we can perceive new levels of grandeur making their entrance into the region. The Rasulids would not advance to the northern coast, but another vigorous state was also emerging there, and soon Oman's archaeological record was also about to transform.

The Hormuzi boom

Around 1300, both sides of the Strait of Hormuz were unified under one political entity known as the Kingdom of Hormuz (or Ormus). Its principal settlements began on the Iranian shore in the twelfth century and, by the fourteenth century, they established a capital on the Island of Hormuz. It is from this stronghold that the dynasty takes its name in history. They were contemporaries of the Rasulids in Yemen and Dhofar, and – like the Rasulids – the Hormuzid rulers were ethnically mixed. Literary sources indicate their Omani origins from the northern shores of eastern Arabia, but the Hormuzids also had very considerable Persian connections. They established their state around 1100 on the shores of the Iranian-side, and then expanded their control to much of southeast Iran, where they also mixed with the Turkic military elite who held sway across much of the Iranian Plateau. Fluctuating fortunes and competition between ports at the entrance to the Persian Gulf saw a gradual consolidation of ever more power and territorial control under the kings of Hormuz and, by 1300, they established themselves as controllers of the entire region with authority over a much wider scope of the northern and southern shores of the Arabian Sea in Iran and Oman than any previous state had achieved. With such a belt of control, the kings and their family members, ensconced along the length of the coasts that entered into the Persian Gulf, could enforce more serious policies of taxation, as ships had no other options for harbour and water resupply than the Hormuz kingdom's network. The time was also propitious for the kings. The height of their power from the mid-thirteenth to fifteenth century corresponds to the heyday of the Muslim Turko-Mongol states in Iraq, Iran and Central Asia, who were exceptional patrons of the arts, ambitious builders, and keen purchasers of luxury items. While these land-based kingdoms could procure goods overland from China, heavy goods such as high-demand ceramics still had to travel by sea to reach Turko-Mongol courts in Iraq and Iran. Moreover, as the various Iranian and Central Asian kingdoms entered violent competition with each other through the thirteenth century across Iraq, the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia, maritime trade became a more secure means to provide the courts in Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mosul and Baghdad with South and East Asian luxury goods. Thanks to the region's geography, which narrows the shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz, the kings of Hormuz found themselves as gatekeepers. With fabulously rich patrons behind them and the incoming merchandise in front of them, their efforts to reorganize trading networks and tax goods created the wealthiest state the region of Oman had yet seen.

A key part of the success of the kings of Hormuz was their ability to control both sides of the Strait of Hormuz, thereby compelling ships to use their harbours. As such, Oman was also the heartland of their polity, and the ports on Oman's northern shores, including Julfar in today's UAE, witnessed much urban expansion thanks to their participation in what is now called the 'Hormuzi boom' from 1300–1500.

It was a period of economic prosperity attested by the unprecedented growth of the region's archaeological sites, as well as massive increases in the finds of coinage, indicating the novel appearance of cash economies whereby cities bought food from the agricultural hinterland as opposed to what previously had been more of a barter-based economic regime.

Perhaps most important in the plans of the kings of Hormuz was that they sought to create a new port city of their own by radically transforming a harbour at Qalhat, which lay nearly 200 km further down the coastline from Muscat, meaning that it was materially nearer the Indian ports, shaving a day or two off the trans-Indian Ocean sailing route. This would slightly reduce the amount of water that ships needed to take with them, a load they could replace with more merchandise. The ocean between Qalhat and India is still vast, thus the saving in water is overall limited, nonetheless, there was an advantage, and by developing Qalhat, the kings of Hormuz created a more advantageous harbour than anything previously known on the Oman coast.

With the wealth of the Kingdom of Hormuz behind it, Qalhat stood to benefit mightily from their patronage, and it is one site where very important architecture remains in evidence. Similar to several of the key sites we have encountered so far, Qalhat was a victim of the sixteenth-century arrival of Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean, and it suffered significant damage when the Portuguese endeavoured to replace the monopoly of Hormuz with their own and caused the abandonment of Qalhat in favour of Muscat. Nonetheless, what remains at Qalhat is substantial. On the one hand, the city followed the local architectural traditions by building houses from coral stone: the remains of a dense network of streets with coral stone foundations attest to the size of Qalhat at its height. However, on the other hand, Qalhat also exhibited the striking import of architectural ideas hitherto not encountered on the Omani coast.

Most spectacular is the structure known today as Bibi Maryam, a high-domed tower built in the precise architectural traditions of the Turko-Iranian tomb towers that proliferated across Iran and Central Asia from ca. 1000 CE onwards (Figure 6). Bibi Maryam was the name of one of the Hormuzi queens of Qalhat, though it is unclear whether the building is properly dedicated to her as earlier records do not associate her name with it and, overall, the structure's function is enigmatic. It is set on a platform and seems to have had a number of related buildings around it, leading some archaeologists to consider it as part of a mosque, but the evidence for this is scant. It is perhaps better to imagine the structure as a mausoleum with a number of pious foundations around it, such as a *khanaqah* or other structures for visiting Sufis, a pattern known from contemporary mausolea in Central Asia of the Timurid-era. The extant building was constructed out of coral (the local building material), though it was covered in a layer of stucco and then elaborately tiled, though only remnants of the green-glazed tiles remain today. It also has ornate *muqarnas* decoration in the dome squinches, which is prototypical of the Iranian/Central Asian domes of the period.

The Bibi Maryam Mausoleum is therefore a testament to the direct import of Turko-Iranian architectural and funerary traditions onto the coast of Oman.

Figure 6 The Bibi-Maryam Mausoleum in Qalhat

© Peter Webb.

Architectural exchange is also evidenced in Qalhat's central mosque. Though the mosque was obliterated, partly by war and partly because its building materials were cannibalized after the site fell into disuse, there are remnants of a startlingly-rich array of glazed tiles that were likely the original adornments of the fourteenth-century mosque (Figure 7), some of which are now housed in the Omani National Museum.

Figure 7 Tiles from the central mosque in Qalhat

Photos © Peter Webb.

The majority are turquoise glazed, but more elaborate tile fragments have also been found, and the *qibla* wall (Mecca-facing) appears to have been decorated with deep blue tiles made from ground lapis lazuli (*lajvardina*). While some of the green-glaze tiles may have been made locally, many of the tiles bear the handiwork of the artisans of Kashan. Just as the Rasulid rulers of Dhofar had commissioned tombstones from India, the rulers of Qalhat also sourced their luxury decorations from afar, utilizing their trading contacts with the wealthy courts of the Iranian Plateau.

Qalhat's decorative style also made use of Chinese pottery imports. Although the city's builders could commission flat tiles for architectural decoration directly from the masters in Kashan (who had perfected such works over two centuries of service to Turko-Mongol patrons), they also clearly appreciated the fine Chinese porcelain, which they were shipping to the wider Middle East, seeking to incorporate it into their architectural setting. They did not acquire tiles from China, but they did embed Chinese bowls directly into the walls, creating circular white and blue patterns to enliven the stucco wall façades. Qalhat seems to have led the way in developing this practice in the region and, in the centuries that followed, the use of Chinese porcelain found its way into the interiors of Oman. The traditionally austere and unadorned architecture of the Omanis on the interior side of the region's mountains became enlivened with Chinese bowls, notably in the prayer niches (*mihrab*) of mosques (Figure 8). The idea also caught on across the Indian Ocean trading network, and later examples of this decorative technique were also found in Zanzibar and the Swahili coast of East Africa (Figure 9).

Figure 8 Mihrab of the Al-Uwayna Mosque with Islamic stucco and Chinese porcelain decoration

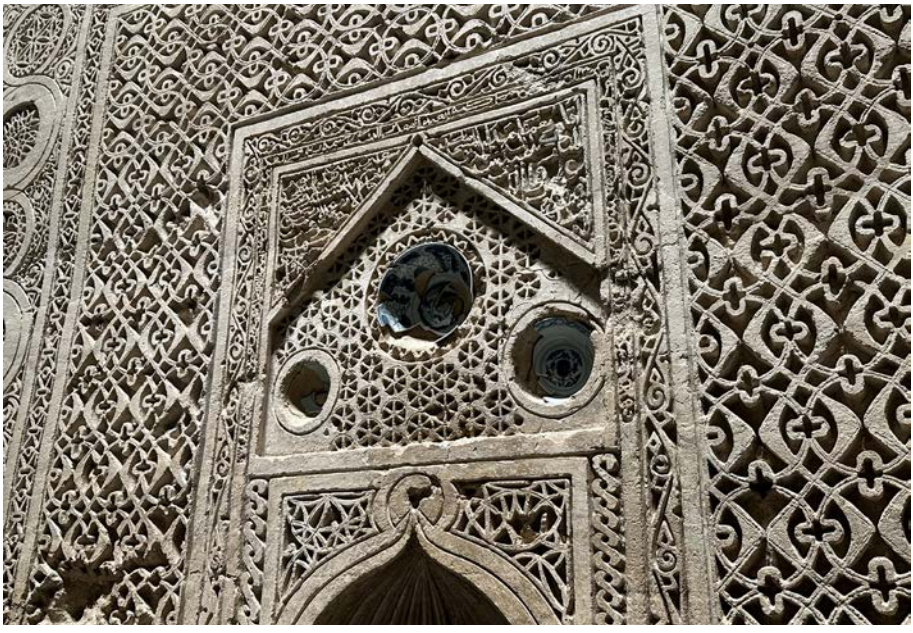


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Figure 9 Tomb with Chinese porcelain decoration in Kizimkazi, Zanzibar

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The remainder of the Qalhat site today is ruinous. However, near the city wall, the outlines of a hammam have been uncovered, consisting of six rooms with *ṣārūj* mortar-lined basins around a central courtyard and underfloor water pipes. This type of hammam is prototypical of the Turko-Iranian style and is unique in the archaeological record of eastern Arabia, again revealing the direct import of an external architectural feature, a transplant of a bathhouse culture from Iran to the shores of Oman under the patronage of the Hormuz rulers. Travellers' accounts and conjectural architectural hypotheses also consider that the city's urban layout was designed with Iranian techniques in mind with their very narrow streets and, perhaps, with wind-towers (*bād-gīr*) to cool the dwellings of Qalhat, which further suggests the architectural exchanges across the Persian Gulf and further into the Iranian plateau in the high-point of Qalhat's fortunes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Towards the modern era: the Portuguese and Yaʿāriba sultans

From the evidence of Dhofar and Qalhat, the southern and northern edges of eastern Arabia developed newfound prosperous integration into transregional trading networks during the 1300s. The former small-scale settlements with modest local architectural and decorative traditions in the first five centuries of Islam, gave way to visibly more opulent constructions and urban development as both shores were incorporated into larger and more vigorous empires than hitherto.

The emergent powers of Dhofar and Hormuz in the thirteenth century had the means to organize trade more concertedly and seem to have generated more centralized wealth to spend on lavish constructions and urban adornment and two centuries of affluence followed, from 1300–1500. But both the Rasulid and Hormuz kingdoms then gradually succumbed to the maritime expansion of Portugal in the sixteenth century, and while the Portuguese continued the trend towards greater centralization of maritime trade, they deliberately damaged the old harbours, and they directed trade to their own cities which they were developing in East Arabia. This is both the origin of Muscat's central position on the Omani coast, but also the collapse of Qalhat and Dhofar.

The Portuguese brought new implements of war with their galleons and canons, and these also influenced local architecture. The Portuguese built their own harbours in a fashion that could defend against canon fire, and powerful towers and forts with tremendously thick *ṣārūj* and stone walls began to appear. The military defence equipment and designs soon spread inland, with the Omanis of the interior – where the Portuguese had no control – beginning to construct similar fortifications of their own in the seventeenth century, most of which survive to this day and are among the iconic monuments of Oman's architectural heritage (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Barka Fort, Yarubid and Busaidi construction, seventeenth to eighteenth century, Oman

© Peter Webb.

We can now appreciate Oman's impressive forts and castles as a heritage constructed through exchange (Figure 11). As Oman became increasingly integrated politically in trading empires, it caught the attention of the wider world, and the experience of the Portuguese occupation of much of the coast from 1500–1700 prompted the local population to adopt the new technology and building techniques, which they would eventually use to oust the Portuguese.

In the wake of crumbling Portuguese power, a dynasty from the interior of Oman, the Yaʿāruba (Yarubids), embarked on their own maritime empire, taking the hybrid Portuguese-Omani styles far abroad, notably to their trading centres in Zanzibar and Mombasa on Africa's eastern shores. After a dynastic struggle, the Yaʿāruba fell to a new dynasty of Omani rulers, the Āl Bū Saʿīdī (Busaidis), who maintained the maritime empire through the nineteenth century, and who are still in power in the current nation state of Oman.

Figure 11 Yabrin (Jabrin) Fort, late seventeenth century, Oman

© Peter Webb.

Conclusion

The architectural traditions of Oman in the wake of the Portuguese and the Omani Yarubid and Busaidi dynasties are beyond our chronological scope, yet they usher in an entirely novel situation whereby rulers from the interior of Oman asserted firm control over the coast, bringing ideas in an opposite direction than what had usually been the case. This chapter has traced the emergence of eastern Arabia onto the world stage over the course of 2,000 years prior to their rise. As trans-Indian Ocean shipping opened up in the third century BCE, the harbours of Oman's coast were well suited to provide water for passing ships, but most of the wealth was directed elsewhere, particularly towards the caravan cities that distributed the luxury wares to the wealthy markets of Rome and Parthian Iran. Although the development of new shipping lanes through the Red Sea, as well as political instability on the Iranian-Roman frontier in the centuries before Islam put a damper on even the modest settlements of eastern Arabia, the rise of Islam and the emergence of tremendously-rich markets in Iraq during the eighth century reinvigorated Eastern Arabian trading opportunities.

Oman generally evaded the control of large states and remained autonomous from the caliphate for most of its history, which had the advantage of local independence, but it perpetuated regional fragmentation and division among small states and left the local rulers less able to maximize the potentials of their location. Accordingly, the early Muslim-era settlements do not show evidence of great architectural opulence. But growth seems to have been inevitable, albeit gradual, and by 1300 the principal Omani cities began to resemble the splendours of the wider Muslim world. On the cusp of the Portuguese arrival in 1500, the full network of Omani commercial connections with Iran, India and even China could be felt simply by gazing upon the walls of the great building projects of the two empires controlling either side of the Arabian Sea coast. Oman was trading with the world and reflecting its transregional connections, and by 1700 it was embracing an active political role in expanding outwards and spreading its architectural influence across the African and Indian shores of its economic and political operations.

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Chapter 8

The Historic Port City of Mombasa, Kenya

By Kalandar Kamalkhan

Mvita (land of the warring people) was the original name of Mombasa in Kenya on the eastern coast of Africa because the people of Mombasa were always at war with neighbouring city-states, with the hinterland tribes, and with imperialist powers such as Portugal, Britain and Oman.

Historically, the people of Mvita were a mixture of Bantus and Orientals (Arabs, Indians, Persians, among others). They belonged to the Swahili (pl. Waswahili) group of peoples found along the eastern coast of Africa. The name, Waswahili, derives from* sahil*, an Arabic word meaning the coast. The Swahili peoples originated from Arabia. They found their way and acquired their name from the* sawahil *(the southwest coast relative to the position of the present Swahililand from Arabia). The Waswahili have been described as either 'Africanized Arabs' or 'Arabized Africans'.

I would argue that prior to the arrival of the Arabs, Indians, Persians, and even the Chinese (and before the arrival of the Portuguese and other colonialist regimes), there was in existence a group of people along the eastern coast of Africa known as the Wangozi, (meaning people who wear skins), implying that these people most probably wore leather skins to cover their bodies.

The Silk Roads and its connection to the historic port of Mombasa

Chinese travellers' accounts of the east coast of Africa are intriguing and peculiar. The first definite information of East Africa by the Chinese was recorded by the ninth-century scholar and writer Tuan Ch'eng Shih, who wrote the *Yu-yang-tsa-tsu*, a collection of topical subjects. In 1947, G.S.P. Freeman Grenville, a historian, well known for his writings on East Africa and the Middle East, quotes him:

> *The land of Po-pa-li is in the south-western Ocean. The people do not eat any cereals but they eat meat: more frequently even they prick a vein of one of their oxen, mix the blood with milk and eat it raw. They have no clothes, but they wrap around their waists a sheep's skin which hangs down and covers them. Their women are clean and well-behaved […]. When Persian traders wish to enter this country, they form a caravan of several thousand men and present them with strips of cloth. All, whether old or young, draw blood and swear an oath, and then only do they trade their goods.*

In 1414, the Emperor of China received a giraffe as a gift from the King of Bengal. The following year, the ruler of the town of Melinda (now called Malindi in Kenya), presented the Chinese emperor with a giraffe. It was the giraffe, therefore, that caused the Chinese to sail to Africa. The giraffe was seen by the Chinese as a mythical animal (like the unicorn) and was regarded as a happy portent; it was a sign of Heaven's favour and proof of the virtue of the Emperor.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), there were many voyages made along the Maritime Silk Roads. The Chinese voyagers and traders landed at Malindi and Mombasa in Kenya. They exchanged Chinese goods, especially silk textiles and ceramics, with live animals like giraffes.

There is significant evidence of Chinese presence and goods in East Africa from Mombasa to Malindi to Lamu and up to Patte Island. The oldest mosque in Kenya is probably at Shanga on Patte Island. It is believed that the mosque was built in the eighth century CE. Shanga itself is an archaeological site located on Patte Island and was inhabited by the Swahili community. Shanga thrived for six centuries until its disappearance in the fifteenth century. Archaeological excavations undertaken in Shanga in the 1950s unearthed coins, pottery, glass, beads, shards and ceramics. The excavations also unearthed information that the town of Shanga comprised a Muslim trading community that had networks in Asia, particularly in China. It is believed that the name 'Shanga' was derived from Shanghai, a port city and the largest city in China, although this belief cannot be proven. It is believed that a Chinese junk was shipwrecked along the coast of Shanga, but the crew swam across the sea and were rescued by local inhabitants. These Chinese people were granted permission to settle on the island. They survived by fishing and exchanging food with the local people. The Chinese settlers married women on the island and raised families. Chinese geneticists have recently traced their ancestry to the Swahili people of Shanga.

Kenyan archaeologist and anthropologist Chapurukha Kusimba (2018) notes:

> *Ancient trade between East Africa and China was a complex affair that involved many communities and took several routes. On the one hand, some African commodities such as ivory, ambergris, gold, rhinoceros' horns and sandalwood were in high demand in Asia, including China. On the other hand, demand for Chinese porcelain and silk among African elites was high.*

Travellers' narratives and historical accounts of Mombasa and the ancient Swahili coast

One of the earliest documents to refer to the eastern coast of Africa is the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which recorded the trade patterns between the West and the East. The exact authorship and date of this document is unknown, but it is widely believed that it was written in 60 CE. The *Periplus* gives a brief account of the east coast of Africa:

> *Beyond Opone, the shore trading more toward the south, first there are the small and great bluffs of Azania: this coast is destitute of harbours, but there are places where ships can lie at anchor, the shore being abrupt: and this course is of six days, the direction being south-west. Then come the small and great beach for another six days' course and after that in order, the Courses of Azania, the first being called Sarapion and the next Nicon: and after that several rivers and other anchorages, one after the other, separately a rest and a run for each day, seven in all, until the Pyralae islands and what is called the channel: beyond which, a little to the south of south-west, after two course of a day and night along the Ausanitic coast, is the island Menuthias, about three hundred stadia from the mainland, low and wooded, in which there are rivers and many kinds of birds and the mountain-tortoise. There are no wild beasts except the crocodiles: but there they do not attack men. In this place there are sewed boats, and canoes hollowed from single logs, which they use for fishing and catching tortoise. In this island they also catch them in a peculiar way, in wicker baskets, which they fasten across the channel-opening between the breakers.*

The *Periplus* continues:

> *Two days' sail beyond, there lies the very last market-town of the continent of Azania, which is called Rhapta, which has its name from the sewed boats (rhaptiôn ploiariôn) already mentioned; in which there is ivory in great quantity, and tortoise shell. Along this coast live men of practical habits, very great in stature, and under separate chiefs for each place. The Mapharitic chief governs it under some ancient right that subjects it to the sovereignty of the state that is become first in Arabia. And the people of Muza now hold it under his authority, and send thither many large ships; using Arab captains and agents, who are familiar with the natives and intermarry them, and who know the whole coast and understand the language.*

Al-Masudi (ca. 916 CE) is probably the first Muslim writer to describe the East African coast, noting the mercantile character of the peoples of the land of Zinj (or the land of the Black people). He wrote: "the land of Zinj produces wild leopard skin. The people wear them as clothes, or export them to Muslim countries." Al-Masudi went on to describe the society of the people of the Zinj, noting that it was monarchical and led by *wafalme* or kings, who ruled by custom and by political expediency. He continued:

> *To go back to the Zanj and their kings, these are known as wafalme, which means son of the Great Lord, since he is chosen to govern them justly. If he is tyrannical or strays from the truth, they kill him and exclude his seed from the throne; for they consider that in acting wrongfully he forfeits his position as the son of the Lord, the King of Heaven and Earth. They call God Malkinajlu, which means Great Lord.*

Al-Masudi goes on to describe their elegant language and, in the process, extolling Swahili poets:

> *The Zanj have an elegant language and men who preach it. One of their holy men will often gather a crowd and exhort his hearers to please God in their lives and be obedient to him. He explains the punishments that follow upon disobedience, and reminds them of their ancestors and kings of old. These people have no religious law: their kings rule by custom and by political expediency.*

Al-Idrisi, an Arab geographer, visited Mombasa between 1100 and 1166 and was probably the first person to mention the town of Mombasa. Al-Idrisi described Mombasa:

> *[A] small place and a dependency of the Zanj. Its inhabitants work in the iron mines and hunt tigers. They have red-coloured dogs which fight every kind of wild beast and even lions. This town lies on the seashore near a large gulf up which ships travel two days' journey; its banks are uninhabited because of the wild beasts that live in the forests where the Zanj go and hunt, as we have already said. In this town lives the King of Zanzibar. His guards go on foot because they have no mounts: horses cannot live there.*

Turning to European travellers, it is worth noting that, according to the Italian writer, Italo Calvino: "Kublai Khan does not necessarily believe anything Marco Polo (ca. 1295) says when he describes the cities he visited on his expedition, but the emperor of the Tartars does continue listening to the young Venetian with greater attention and curiosity than he shows any other messenger of his. Marco Polo continues to describe different cities and gives those cities different names until some point in time when Kublai Khan, noticing that Marco Polo's cities resemble one another, reconstructs the cities himself and asks Marco Polo to confirm their existence. 'I have neither desires nor fears', the Khan declared, 'and my dreams are composed either by my mind or by chance. Cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither the one nor the other suffices to hold up their walls.

You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours. Or the question it asks you, forcing you to answer, like Thebes through the mouth of the Sphinx'."

Even though Marco Polo travelled the Silk Roads and did not travel much in East Africa, it is said that he did pass by Madagascar and Zanzibar. Marco Polo described Zanzibar as a large and splendid island where the people were idolaters, having a king and a language of their own and paying tribute to none. He describes the appearance of men and women, their diets and concluded by telling Khubilai Khan: "You should know that the men of the island are good fighters and acquit themselves very manfully in battle; for they are very brave and almost without fear of death".

Accounts of travels by Arab geographers include those of Ibn Battuta (whose real name was Muhammad Abdallah), who was born in Tangier in 1304. At the age of 21, while setting out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn Battuta lost his way, but later completed one of the five main pillars of Islam. Ibn Battuta travelled to India and to other parts of the world and narrated accounts of his travels to the east coast of Africa (ca. 1331):

> *I embarked at Maqdashaw [Mogadishu] for the Sawahil country, with the object of visiting the town of Kulwa [Kilwa] in the island of the Zinj. We came to Mambasa [Mombasa], a large island two days' journey by sea from the sawahil country. It possesses no territory on the mainland. They have fruit trees on the island, but no cereals, which have to be brought to them from the Sawahil. Their food consists of bananas and fish. The inhabitants are pious, honourable and upright and they have well-built wooden mosques. We stayed one night on this island and then pursued our journey to Kulwa, which is a large town on the coast. The majority of its inhabitants are Zanj, jet-black in colour, and with tattoo-marks on their faces. I was told by a merchant that the town of Sufala lies a fortnight's journey (south) from Yufi in the country of the Limis, which is a month's journey distant from it. Kulwa is a very fine and substantially built town and all its buildings are of wood.*

History professor Kenneth Ingham notes that China does not appear to have traded directly with the East African coast before the fifteenth century. Even then, Chinese sailors only reached East Africa on two occasions: between 1417 and 1419, an expedition visited Malindi, and between 1421 and 1422, another expedition reached only as far as Mogadishu.

Even though most of these travellers' accounts do not specifically mention the architecture of the Swahili peoples, there is some mention of the identity and culture of the peoples living on the eastern coast of Africa. It is interesting that Ibn Battuta mentioned seeing "wooden mosques". Recent research by archaeologists has supported this statement by showing positive indications of timber structures in the sub-strata of the sites excavated on the northern coast of Kenya. Most of the (European or non-European) travellers' accounts of the people and land of the Zinj mention, among other things, five aspects in common: trade, clothing, society, language and religion.

These accounts note the role of the people of Zinj as intermediaries between the interior and the coast of East Africa. They also note that the people of Zinj wore animal skins as clothes, hence the name Wangozi. The society is monarchical, led by a *mfalme* (king), while the language is elegant or poetical. The way of the religion, as described in travellers' accounts, is that of custom worship. Analysing these travellers' accounts and the common denominator, as noted by the different travellers, it is safe to say that there is little mention of architecture. However, the five common themes (trade, clothing, society, language and religion) do have significant bearing on the architecture of the people of Zinj. The important message that can be extracted from these travellers' accounts, especially as recorded by al-Masudi, is that the people of Zinj or the Waswahili are honourable and do not act wrongfully; qualities that have never been rightfully attributed to the Waswahili by other tribes on the eastern coast of Kenya.

Some of the best-known and most-researched chronicles of the Waswahili include the *Kilwa Chronicle*, the *Patte Chronicle*, the *Mombasa Chronicle* and the *Lamu Chronicle*. Even though these four chronicles vary in content, their similarities are more pronounced than their differences.

The chronicles of the Waswahili date back to the ninth century, all the way to the nineteenth century. These accounts chronicled the founding of the Swahili towns, the genealogy of the sultans or rulers and where they came from. They recounted certain episodes of the history of the eastern coast of Africa and, most importantly, the chronicles sung praises of their respective towns and fighters.

The advent of the European colonizers

The Portuguese Viceroy of India, Dom Francisco de Almeida, set sail for Africa and reached the eastern coast of Africa in 1505. He noted:

> *Mombasa is a very large town and lies on an island from one and half to two leagues round. The town is built on rocks on the higher part of the island and has no walls on the side of the sea; but on the land side it is protected by a wall as high as the fortress. The houses are the same type as those of Kilwa: some of them are three storeyed and all are plastered with lime.*

This shows that by 1505, long before the advent of the Portuguese, Mombasa was already a flourishing city. Unfortunately, this account was written as the Portuguese were sacking the city for the first time, and it is unknown how many of these buildings survived the battle. In addition to the destruction of 1505, the town was sacked in 1528 by Nuno de Cunha and again in 1588 after a Turk, called Mirale Bey, conspired with local leaders to displace the Portuguese from Mombasa.

In 1487, the Portuguese had rounded the Cape of Good Hope in search of a way to India. As part of this effort, Vasco da Gama set out in 1497 to explore the Indian Ocean.

He dropped anchor in Mombasa on 7 April 1498, but he sailed on to Malindi soon afterwards due to the unfriendly reception given by the people of Mombasa. This encounter was the start of a relationship that was to continue for the next 200 years and which was never very cordial. The Portuguese began the construction of Fort Jesus in 1593, moving permanently from Malindi, where they had been based. The fort was finished in 1597 and a small Portuguese garrison was stationed there. A small town called Gavana grew up beside the fort to cater to the traders and business folk that were associated with the Portuguese maritime trade. The town was walled to distinguish it from the original Swahili town to the north. The inhabitants were not all Portuguese, however, given the fact that both the Mandhry and the Basheikh mosques were founded around the same time as Fort Jesus was constructed. None of the buildings from this period (except Fort Jesus and the two mosques) remain standing today.

Throughout the entire span of their rule, the influence of the Portuguese was never very profound, nor was their contribution to the culture long lasting. They looked at the coast as a necessary stopping point on the way to Goa and the Far East, and they treated it as such. They never made any penetration inland, nor did they do much to cultivate the towns they controlled.

The fall of the Portuguese left the Omani Arabs as the undisputed rulers of the east coast of Kenya. The fall of Fort Jesus in 1698 proclaimed the end of Portuguese rule.

The Omani Arab rule

After chasing out the Portuguese colonizers from the East African coast around 1698, the Omani Arab rule, which lasted for about two centuries up to around 1895, achieved prosperity thanks to the Indian Ocean trade of the Swahili city-states, such as Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, Patte, Kilwa, Bagamoyo and Zanzibar, among others. To consolidate its power along the Swahili Coast, Oman moved its capital from Muscat to Zanzibar. At this time, Zanzibar was more important than Mombasa (although not totally overshadowed by Zanzibar) in terms of trade, politics, and as a destination point for explorers.

It was during the Omani Arab rule that Mombasa and other Swahili city-states prospered thanks to increased trade. Prior to the arrival of the Omani Arabs on the eastern coast of Africa, the Swahili shelters were built of mud and thatch with makuti or dried coconut palm leaves as the roofing material. The Omani Arabs taught the local Wangozi people how to build with stones obtained from the abundant coral reef. *Boriti* or mangrove poles were used as beams to hold up the flat roof of Swahili houses; a change from the pitched *makuti* roof to the mangrove poled-flat roof.

It was during the Omani Arab reign that the Kiswahili language came into existence, borrowing words from the Arabic language and incorporating them into the existing Bantu language of Kingozi.

Pre-and post-independence of Kenya

The end of the Omani Arab rule in 1895 was when the eastern coast of Africa was declared a British Protectorate. In 1902, the British built a railway line from Mombasa to Kampala and moved the capital from Mombasa to Nairobi.

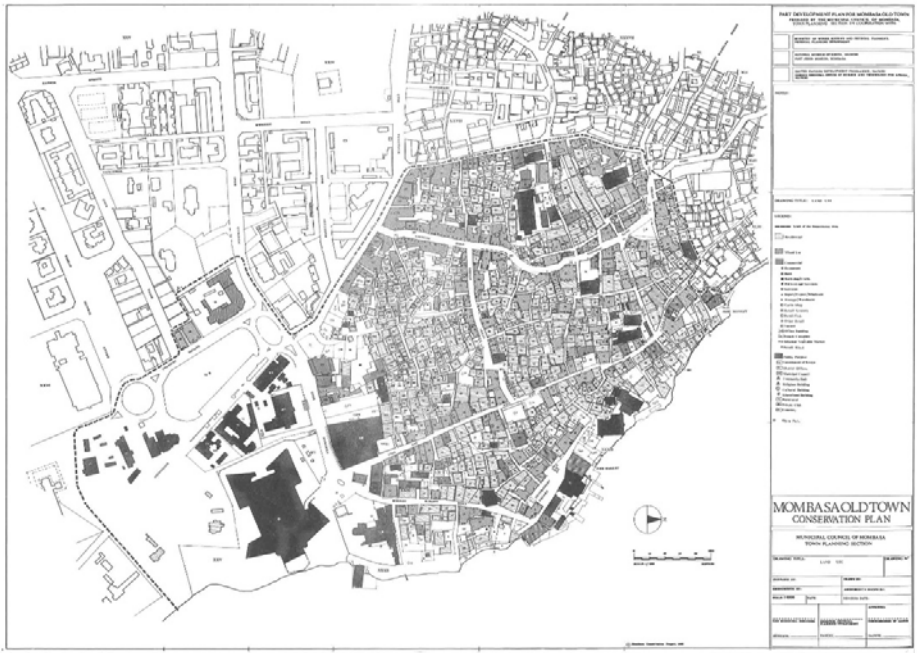
In 1963, after periods of revolt, Kenya gained its independence and began its period of self-governance.

The heritage and architecture of the historic port city of Mombasa

The island of Mombasa is located in a very strategic position facing the Indian Ocean. The Forodhani, or the old harbour (perhaps the oldest seaport along the East African coast), was strategically positioned to guard against invasion from enemy ships sailing the Indian Ocean. Any ship entering Mombasa is easily noticed and identified, thus giving time for its residents to defend themselves against any enemy, or to prepare themselves for business with friendly vessels. Seeing Mombasa's strategic position in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese decided to build Fort Jesus midway between the high Indian Ocean seas and the creek leading to Forodhani, the old harbour.

The original settlement of Mombasa was in the northern and southern sections of the island rather than any other section. This is evident in many travellers' narratives as they sailed around the eastern coast of Africa. Most, if not all, Swahili city-states like Lamu, Zanzibar, Patte, among others, followed this same trend of development, that is, settlements were in the north and south. One might be tempted to argue that the physical setting of the islands (such as their topography) determined the growth of the two historic towns. My hypothesis is that a whole range of social and cultural factors played a major role in shaping the two historic towns to become what they are today. The Waswahili, as Muslims, revered the direction to Mecca where they would always turn (five times a day) for prayers. This meant that whenever the Waswahili in East Africa wanted to perform prayers, they would always face north (in the direction of Mecca) relative to the eastern coast of Africa. The northern direction, therefore, had a religious and symbolic meaning for the Waswahili. This is probably why Swahili towns like Mombasa, Lamu and Zanzibar started in the northern sections of the islands, but also in the southern sections, with these sections defining the town's boundaries (Figure 1). The towns would then grow westwards but could not go eastwards because of the Indian Ocean. Cemeteries would be positioned at the northernmost and southernmost points of Swahili towns, which would determine the limits of a Swahili coastal town. No development would occur further north or south of the location of the cemeteries.

Figure 1 Part of Mombasa Old Town**



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As the towns grew, the northern section would grow southerly and the southern section would grow northerly, meeting at a strategic middle point that would form the town centre or the 'heart' of the historic town (Figure 2). This centre would have a large open ground or a large mosque where people would congregate for social or religious purposes. The heart of the town would be where all social, cultural or religious gatherings would take place.

Figure 2 The 'heart of the Old Town of Mombasa'
Open ground outside the World Heritage Site of Fort Jesus

© Mohamed Zein Swabir.

Wherever and whenever possible, all houses in Mombasa Old Town, in much the same way as mosques, would be oriented towards the north, not because of any physical factors but because of religious symbolism and connotations. The north direction was considered sacred. Anything non-sacred or profane, if turned towards the north, was considered blasphemous. Some examples included ensuring that toilets did not face north or beds would not be positioned in a north-south direction. Indeed, it was considered blasphemous to sit on a toilet facing north or to sleep on a bed with one's feet facing north.

City walls

Like other Swahili towns, Mombasa was a walled city that was built by the Portuguese (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) for their own protection, as their rule over the Waswahili was met with hostility. The walled area covered much of what is now known as the Old Town, or Kibokoni, which is the name of the *mtaa* or ward of the Old Town. The last remnant of the wall was recently demolished when a chain of local supermarkets constructed a new supermarket near Likoni, south of Mombasa island.

Chinese explorers around the fourteenth century noted, "fine walled cities were growing up under the control of rulers who exercised great authority".

Linda Donley-Reid (1988) concluded a social meaning rather than a defensive mechanism for the city walls in Swahili towns, noting: "Swahili city walls were certainly a major device for the marking of social boundaries, perhaps more so than they were effective for defence purposes", and that, "the clear division of Swahili towns into distinct divisions of living quarters was purely intentional and symbolic in nature." My hypothesis is that the walls were 'sacred' enclosures that 'spiritually' protected the Waswahili, walled in the interior of the Swahili towns. Talismans containing Qur'anic verses were buried under the city walls to protect the inhabitants from attackers, including from other Swahili city-states or other African tribes, such as the Wa-Galla and the Wa-Zimba, who were believed to be cannibals.

Social divisions and the dichotomous identity of the Waswahili

Even though they defy easy categorization, Mombasa has two distinguishable areas: an area for the elite (Arabs) and an area for the commoners (Africans). The elite area of Mombasa was Kibokoni, which is now a gazetted area and protected by the National Museums of Kenya; it is also known as the Mombasa Old Town Conservation Area. This area is where the elites lived in the large traditional houses of Mombasa. These elites were somehow related to the different clans of Oman (the Busaidy, the Mazrui, the Shikely) who ruled Mombasa and other parts of the eastern coast of Africa for about two centuries. The commoners' section would be in other parts of Mombasa Old Town, such as Kuze, Inglani and Mji wa Kale, who were considered more African than Arab.

The dichotomous identity of the Waswahili – Arab and African – is also evident in the planning of their towns. In the case of Mombasa, the Kibokoni area is very important as it contains many historically and architecturally significant buildings. This area is characterized by two- to three-storey traditional houses built with coral stones, timber balconies and windows, and timber carved doors (Figure 3). This area has retained its character and has remained intact to the present day. The rest of the Old Town is mostly characterized by one-storey houses built of a mixture of mud and coral stones. Areas outside the Old Town, like Mwembe Tayari and Majengo, had houses built of mud mixed with coral stones, and roofs made of *makuti* (palm tree leaves). The architectural style, the use of building materials, and the size of the buildings in Mwembe Tayari and Majengo are distinctly different from the flat-roofed and large coral stone houses of Old Town. Recently, this area has experienced development, with contemporary buildings mimicking older prototypes and new structures exceeding ten storeys (Figure 4).

Figure 3 The main street of Old Town: Ndia Kuu Road

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Figure 4 Contemporary building 'mimicking Fort Jesus'

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Architecture of the *mtaa*

Just like Mombasa Old Town, Lamu and Zanzibar stone towns, all Swahili towns are divided into *mitaa* (singular: *mtaa*). *Mitaa* are wards, districts, neighbourhoods or housing blocks within the Swahili towns, with interesting and notable features. Firstly, even though *mitaa* are in specific geographic settings, they are socially defined rather than contained in geographic boundaries. No specific boundaries exist between the different *mtaa*, rather, they are defined by clan lineages. Clans constructed their houses to be closely knit together around a nucleus, with the nucleus of the *mtaa* belonging to the headman of that particular *mtaa*. These *mitaa* grew in size and created smaller *mitaa* or sub-*mitaa*. In addition, the naming of the *mtaa* is an important aspect of Swahili towns. They are named after events or specific landmarks. James de Vere Allen (1993), a former curator at Lamu Museum in Kenya, who undertook extensive research on Swahili culture, art and history, categorized three Swahili *mitaa*: i) patrician *mitaa*, belonging to inhabitants of Arab descent, whose houses were constructed of stone; ii) commoners' *mitaa*, where households are bound by cultural, linguistic or other purposes, whose houses were constructed according to the customs of peoples of different origins; and iii) *mitaa* occupied by Swahili refugees, whose houses would be constructed either of stone or mud and thatch.

The *mitaa* are a complex spatial web of houses, streets, communal spaces and religious buildings that are not easily understood, even by professionals in the field of architecture and urban planning. A mtaa would have been conceived by one member of a clan or household constructing one house, with the other members of the clan later constructing their houses around this first house. These houses would form a nucleus around the first house. The owner of the first built house would be the headman of that particular *mtaa*, who is male, as Swahili society is patriarchal. The headman would be consulted on many cultural, religious, social or economic issues that might arise within that particular *mtaa*. Similarly, another clan would have its headman build a house, with the other members of the clan constructing their houses around the headman's house.

The boundaries of these *mitaa* are impossible to delineate by any 'outsider' not living in these *mitaa*. Only a resident of that *mtaa* or a neighbouring *mtaa* is able to manoeuvre his or her way through the different *mitaa*. The streets and the spaces between the houses are arranged in such a way that only local inhabitants are able to find their way around and all strangers are easily noticed whenever they enter the *mtaa* (Figure 5). In this way, they would never be able to weave their way around. The inhabitants of the different *mitaa* knew each other. Even inhabitants of other *mitaa* are easily recognized whenever they pass through the different *mitaa* as they easily meander their way. This would not be the case for strangers who would either lose their way or hesitate, or even ask the *mtaa* inhabitants for directions.

Figure 5 Street of a mtaa – winding and with no cul-de-sacs

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As Martin Packer, a scholar in cultural psychology, wrote:

> *The difference between a rationalist or empiricist explanation and a hermeneutic explanation is a little like the difference between a map of a city and an account of that city by someone who lives in it and walks its streets. The map is the product of detached description (though the description relies on kinds of direct practical involvement, guided by specialized tools and instruments – measuring rods, theodolites – whose role is covered up when the map is finally drawn). Different maps will emphasise different aspects of the city: its street layout, its transportation or its phone lines. However, all these maps are abstract formalizations, capturing only those features of the place that would be unchanged if no one lived there. They are designed to serve a stranger to the city as much as – perhaps more than – a resident. The account one would give of living in a city on a daily basis, on the other hand, is likely to be personal, incomplete and prejudiced. Therein lies its usefulness to a newcomer who has come to stay or (to make the simile more accurate) to someone who already lives in the city, but now wishes to know it better and to live it more fully.*

Streets in the Swahili *mitaa* never had and still do not have dead-ends or cul-de-sacs. One alley leads to another and then to the next, forming an intricate labyrinth.

Architects have explained the phenomenon of the *mitaa* – the closely knitted houses and the narrow streets – as being responses to the harsh humid climates of Swahili towns. While this assertion has some truth, it is also worth noting that, to a Swahili person, the *mitaa* were 'safe' abodes for them. The narrow winding alleyways with no cul-de-sacs were used as escape routes from the authorities and colonizers who would harass the local residents time and again.

Martin Packer noted:

> *The professional mapmaker must regard a city as merely a juxtaposition of physical objects. For its inhabitants, it is a system of possibilities and resources, frustrations and obstacles, and two people will find both commonalities and differences in their accounts of it.*

The spatial qualities of the *mitaa* in Mombasa and other Swahili towns on the eastern coast of Africa are quite similar. Even the naming of the *mitaa* from past events and/or landmarks are adhered to. The Mombasa Old Town has *mitaa* names, for example, Kibokoni means the place of hippos (as this area had a swamp with hippos), Mwembeni (Swahili: mango tree), and Makadara (Arabic: destiny from God), as this was a place where Baluchi soldiers from Iran were housed by the British colonizers.

The Portuguese Viceroy of India, Dom Francisco de Almeida, noted:

> *The streets are very narrow, so that two people cannot walk abreast in them: all the houses have stone seats in front of them, which makes the street narrower […] The town has more than 600 houses which are thatched with palm leaves; these are collected green for this purpose […]. There were also many balconies projecting over the streets under which one could shelter.*

Almeida's observations explain the arrangement of the *mitaa*. In Mombasa, the *mitaa* and its complex nature of alleyways usually had open areas or open squares where the community would congregate during weddings, funerals, meetings, and so on. These open areas were irregularly shaped to mimic the shape of the *mitaa*, which were also irregularly shaped. These open areas would, in many cases, be centrally positioned. In many cases, a mosque would be located within or very near this central open space. An example of such an open area in Mombasa Old Town is the Tijara Garden (the garden of value, benefit, profit). The Tijara Garden is centrally located and would be used as a place of congregation for residents of Mombasa Old Town for weddings, funerals, social functions, and even for political meetings. The Anisa Mosque is located in the northern part of the Tijara Garden (Kamalkhan, 2022).

Communal areas

Apart from the residential houses, the Swahili cities along the eastern coast of Africa have communal areas where mostly men spend much of their time, aside from when they are at home. These communal areas are located outside the mosques where men congregate five times a day for prayers.

Baraza or stone benches are usually constructed outside the Swahili houses where – for the sake of privacy – guests are entertained without necessarily entering the house. The *baraza* is also an important feature outside the mosque where the faithful can sit and talk after prayers.

The mosque

The mosque is the most sacred building and communal space of the Waswahili. It is where the people of the caste – just like other Muslims elsewhere in the world – would pray five times a day between sunrise and just after sunset. The architectural composition of a mosque would include a *musalla* or a prayer hall, the *mihrab* or the prayer niche for the imam or leader of the prayers, and the *mimbar* or pulpit and the ablution area.

The *musalla* is the interior of a mosque comprising square or rectangular proportions, which are divided into bays by columns, and is the place where the Waswahili offer their prayers. The *mihrab* is situated into the qibla wall (the wall facing Mecca) where the imam or religious leader stands and leads the prayers. The *minbar* is a raised pulpit, usually made of timber, where the imam stands and gives his sermons, especially during Friday prayers.

The ablution area is the 'wet' area with water taps where the Waswahili faithful – like other Muslims in the world – wash their bodies (wrists, faces, hands, legs and head) as a form of purification before performing their prayers.

The mosques in Mombasa are mostly decorated on the exterior and in the interior. Playful colours would be used on the walls, the minarets and the domes, whereas the mosques in Lamu are quite austere on the outside and decorated in the interior (Figure 6). The exterior walls of Lamu mosques are typically whitewashed.

Figure 6 Basheikh Mosque, one of the earliest mosques in the Old Town

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The *baraza*

As Almeida noted, "all the houses have stone seats in front of them, which makes the street narrower". When one walks in the Old Town, one sees what is called the baraza, or the stone bench, outside the houses of Mombasa Old Town.

The *baraza* is a stone bench built on the outside walls of houses, shops or even mosques (Figure 7). On these *barazas*, the men of Swahili society would sit and socialize in between refreshments, like bitter coffee, water, soda or juice. It is very rare to see Swahili women occupying any *baraza* as it is a male social space, rather than for women. These *barazas* are usually built at the entrances of houses, shops or mosques. The *baraza* is a necessary architectural element of a Swahili town, whether in Mombasa, Lamu or Zanzibar.

Figure 7 The *baraza* or stone bench

A common feature outside the houses and mosques of the Old Town

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The madrasa

The madrasa is a school that teaches the principles and understanding of the Holy Qur'an. The madrasa started at the time of one of the greatest Sufis in Islam, Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali. It is a great institution of excellence in Islamic teachings, especially for boys and girls who start attending Qur'anic schools from the age of 5 or 6 years. These madrasas sometimes form part of the mosque, and sometimes they can be entities on their own. Most madrasas in Mombasa are conducted or held inside the mosques. However, some madrasas are conducted in private homes where a room is converted to accommodate the teaching of Islamic principles to the young novices. There are no significant buildings for the madrasa worth mentioning, as the madrasa is part of the mosque and is usually located at the back of it, either in the *musalla* or praying space, or in a separate room attached to the mosque.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries are important communal areas for the Waswahili. These are open spaces where the Waswahili bury their dead. As noted earlier, the cemeteries would be located at the northern and southern edges of a Swahili town; they defined the boundaries of the Swahili cities. In addition to being spaces to bury the dead, cemeteries are also places where the living visit and pay their respects to dead relatives or friends. It is also a widely held belief that cemeteries are breeding places for the 'spirits'. According to the Swahili belief system, the cemetery and the ocean are the two biggest breeding grounds for 'bad spirits'.

The *kiwanda*

The *kiwanda* is an open space, as explained earlier, located in the centre of a Swahili town, such as in Mombasa and Lamu (known as Kawanda). It is not a built-up space, and it is where the Waswahili would hold functions like wedding ceremonies, funerals and meetings. Within the houses in Mombasa, the *kiwanda* provides daylight and ventilation. The *kiwanda* also serves another important function, that is, where all household activities take place, such as cooking and washing clothes. The women of the household stay indoors the entire day, carrying out household chores. The *kiwanda*, as well as the balconies, serve as the only 'outdoor' spaces for women.

Individual areas

In addition to being a very social society, Waswahili also value their individual and family privacy. The Waswahili spend their private time in their homes with their families. The *ukumbi*, or the living room, is an important space for the family to relax in the early evening and night time, where the elderly engage the younger ones in storytelling. This activity is reserved for the family, as it would be unexpected to have visitors to the house at night. These periods are reserved for the family to unwind and engage in social activities, like storytelling.

The Swahili house

The Swahili house is a very private space for the Waswahili. No visitor is allowed to sleep in the house unless the person is a very close relative of the man or woman of the household. A visitor is not allowed in the Swahili house in Mombasa, or even in other Swahili towns like Lamu, Zanzibar or Patte, without a proper reason and kinship relations. A visitor would normally be entertained on the *baraza* or stone bench, mentioned earlier.

The Swahili house in Mombasa, like in Zanzibar, is grander and bigger than a Swahili house in Lamu, Patte or Malimdi. The Mombasa Swahili house is decorated externally, more than the Lamu Swahili house. Architectural elements, like the timber balconies and timber brackets, can only be seen in Mombasa (Figure 8). There are no balconied houses in towns such as Patte or Lamu. Rather, there are 'veranda houses' in Lamu, which are mostly located on the seafront promenade. The balconies of Swahili houses in Mombasa are spaces where the women spend their time watching street activities. The same cannot be said for the Lamu veranda houses, which are normally an extension of the sitting room, the dining room or even the bedroom. Unlike Mombasa, the women in Lamu do not use the verandas for observing the street activities below.

The houses in Mombasa are extrovert or outward-looking. Balconies in Mombasa contribute to this extrovert quality (Figure 9), whereas internal courtyards are where women spend most of their time.

Figure 8 Swahili house with protruding timber balconies

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Figure 9 Swahili house with protruding timber balconies and Gujarati doors

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Building materials

Swahili houses all along the eastern coast of Africa use similar building materials that are extracted from the natural resources of the coastline. Coral stones are used for the walls, mangrove timber posts are used for beams, while the doors, windows and balconies (in Mombasa) are made of timber. As mangrove poles cannot be more than 3 metres in length, the internal spaces of rooms are long and narrow (Kamalkhan, 2022).

The Portuguese Viceroy de Almeida noted that, "the town has more than 600 houses which are thatched with palm leaves", but it is also interesting to note that the Chinese explorers, who came to East Africa between 1417 and 1419, and whose main objective was to increase trade and the expansion of influence and glory of the Ming Dynasty, noted that: "During this period of advance, stone houses, palaces and mosques were replacing the earlier buildings of lath and wood" (Ingham, 1962).

This proves that way before the Portuguese established their base in Mombasa, with the construction of Fort Jesus in 1593, houses in the Old Town were already being built using coral stones, a notable change from the use of mud and thatch in the construction of Swahili houses.

The conservation of the Old Town of Mombasa

Mainly due to its historical significance, as well as cultural and architectural significance, Mombasa Old Town has been gazetted as a National Monument under the Museums and Heritage Act of 2006. The gazetted section of Mombasa Old Town also acts as a buffer zone to the World Heritage site of Fort Jesus, Mombasa.

The conservation and management of the built heritage in Kenya is the responsibility of the National Museums of Kenya, which is the custodian of the country's national heritage.

Conclusion

The historic port city of Mombasa (originally known as Mvita) is the home of the Waswahili, or people of the coast. Mombasa was the first capital of Kenya and the strongest Swahili city-state, alongside Zanzibar. There is significant evidence of Chinese presence and goods in East Africa, from Mombasa to Malindi to Lamu and up to Patte Island. During the Ming Dynasty, between 1368 CE and 1644 CE, there were many voyages made along the Maritime Silk Roads. The Chinese voyagers and traders landed in Malindi and Mombasa in Kenya, exchanging Chinese goods, especially silk textiles and ceramics, with live animals like giraffes.

In terms of trade along the Silk Roads, this exchange had an effect on how Mombasa grew and developed. The town planning and architecture of Mombasa was narrated centuries ago by travellers of different origins and – although Mombasa has not changed drastically – the city has grown and developed. With the use of new building materials, new structures have been constructed that now define the new Mombasa, with its own distinct character from the Old Town, which has now been gazetted by the National Museums of Kenya for posterity as a national monument.

Swahili coast historical chronology

60 CE	The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* first mentions the Swahili coast. It was likely written by a Greek living in Alexandria and was a guide to the route to China. The *Periplus* does not specifically mention the Swahili coast or the city-states, but instead refers to places like Azania, Opone, Pyralae Islands and Rhapta, which could have referred to the Swahili islands and coast.
150 CE	The *Geographia*, composed by Ptolemy (an Alexandrine Greek), mentions the East Africa coast and the names of Azania, Rhapta and Zingis (the land of the dark peoples).
700 CE	Shanga town, on the northern coast of Kenya, was probably the earliest known Swahili settlement.

863 CE	The *Yu-yuang-tsa-tsu*, a compendium of different forms of knowledge, was written by the Chinese scholar, Tuan Ch'eng Shih, who mentions the land of 'Po-pa-li', which is thought to refer to the Swahili coast.
916 CE	Al-Masudi was probably the first Muslim writer to describe the Swahili coast. He mentions the Land of Zanj and the ivory trade, which was taking place at that time.
1100-66	Al-Idrisi, an Arab geographer, did not travel himself but he relied heavily on other writers, and he mentions the island of Zanzibar and the towns of Malindi and Mombasa.
1226	Chao Ju-kua, author of *Chu-fan-chih* (A Description of Barbarous Peoples), mentions Zanzibar and describes the wildlife of the Land of Zanj.
1295	Marco Polo, a Venetian, narrated his travels to Khubilai Khan, the Yuan emperor. It is believed that Marco Polo did not visit the East African coast, but he nevertheless described what he thought the Land of Zanj would look like.
1331	Mohamed ibn Abdullah ibn Battuta, probably the greatest of the Muslim travellers, narrated his visit to the East African coast. He mentions the lifestyle of the peoples of Mogadishu, Kilwa and Mombasa.
1498	Vasco da Gama, the first European to circumnavigate the southern tip of the African continent, was looking to reach India. He was accepted in Malindi and given a captain to take him to the 'Land of Spices'. However, Vasco da Gama was met with hostile Mombasa inhabitants.
1502	Vasco da Gama's second voyage to the Swahili coast.
1593	To protect themselves against the hostile Mombasa inhabitants, the Portuguese built Fort Jesus in Mombasa.
1698	Omani Arabs captured Fort Jesus, drove away the Portuguese, and colonized the Swahili coast.
1840	Oman moved its capital from Muscat to Zanzibar to consolidate Omani power along the Swahili coast.
1895	British Protectorate declared.
1902	The railway line from Mombasa to Nairobi was completed. The British colonialists moved the capital of Kenya from Mombasa to Nairobi.
1907	Legal emancipation of slaves on the East African coast.
1960s	Independence of East African countries.

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Chapter 9

Zanzibar's Old 'Stone Town', Tanzania

By Abdul Sheriff

For its size, Zanzibar occupies a very large and romantic space in the collective imagination. Azania, the Land of Zanj, Zanguebar, Zinjibar, and other names, were used to refer to the entire East African coast, becoming a repository of fabulous stories, like those of Sinbad. These fantasies of a far-off island paradise, where aromatic spices and ivory, princes and slaves were strangely intertwined, were based partly on historical reality. To this heritage, the real Zanzibar added its own romance in the nineteenth century when it reached its prime, when Zanzibari Princess Salme eloped with a German and wrote her real-life story for all to read and wonder.

The maritime world of the Indian Ocean

Although the Old Stone Town of Zanzibar is largely the creation of the last two centuries, it is a testament to a long tradition of the commercial and cultural landscape of the Indian Ocean along the East African coast that goes back two millennia (see the map at the beginning of Section II).

The first century CE Greek trade directory, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, mentions that the major market town on the East African coast of Azania was Rhapta on the mainland, and that Yemen sent small ships there, "mostly with Arab captains and crews who trade and intermarry with the mainlanders of all the places and know their language." The two major themes in the history of the East African coast, oceanic trade and the intermingling of peoples around the Indian Ocean were thus already in full display.

The first theme, oceanic trade, depended on the all-important monsoons from the northern rim of the Indian Ocean towards the East African coast, India and Southeast Asia from December, and the subsequent southerly monsoon from April, which were used to take sailors and traders back to their homes in the north (please see the master map at the beginning of Part III). The second theme was the inevitable coming together of peoples and cultures of the Indian Ocean. Oceanic sailing and trade have universally been the domain of able-bodied men, who were often away from home for up to ten months. It was therefore inevitable that they would have intimate relationships around the Indian Ocean, establishing homesteads whenever they went to Yemen, the Swahili coast and beyond, and eastwards as far as Indonesia and even China, raising their mixed, multi-cultural families across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean. The extent of these relationships has now been confirmed by the growing number of genetic studies conducted along the East African coast, which reveal an astonishingly large percentage of Middle Eastern male genes and a predominance of African female genes in these populations.

About one millennium later, the almost simultaneous rise of the Islamic Abbasid Dynasty in Iraq and the Tang Dynasty in China from the ninth century created a huge market for trade across the Indian Ocean. The celebrated Arab traveller, Masudi, who visited the Land of Zanj several times in the tenth century wrote: "It is from this country that come tusks of ivory weighing fifty pounds and more. They usually go to Oman, and from there are sent to China and India… and if it were not so, ivory would be common in Muslim lands." He also wrote that the Land of Zanj had a mixed population of Muslims and Zanj idolaters, and that they spoke an elegant language.

One of the islands that Masudi mentions was called Kanbalu, which is thought to refer to Ras Mkumbuu in Zanzibar's sister island of Pemba, which had a Muslim population. Another long-term religious link had thus been added with the spread of Islam, not with the sword, but with the same monsoon system, the wooden dhows, and the agency of sailors and traders. The archaeologist, Mark Horton, notes that the Friday Mosque on Ras Mkumbuu, dated from the twelfth to the thirteenth century CE, was the largest and best-preserved mosque on the Swahili coast in its time.

Its counterpart on the sister island of Unguja was the early twelfth-century Kizimkazi Mosque (Figure 1a and 1b), the oldest mosque in East Africa, which has unique Kufic inscriptions (Figure 2). It was built in Hijra 500 (1107 CE) by Sheikh Sayyid Abu Imran *Mfaume* [king] al-Hasan b. Mohammed. According to Horton, the Kufic style of the inscription is certainly linked to the tradition in the Persian Gulf, but it was carved on *porite* coral, which is native to the Swahili coast.

Figure 1a *Mihrab* of the Kizimkazi Mosque, 1107 CE

© Abdul Sheriff.

Figure 1b *Mihrab* of the Kizimkazi Mosque, 1107 CE, present state

© Janet Purdy.

Figure 2 Kufic inscription of the Kizimkazi Mosque, 1107, detail, present state

© Janet Purdy.

The dawn of a new era

A new era dawned on the Indian Ocean during the fifteenth century. It was at the beginning of this century that the Chinese launched their first naval expedition to the 'Western Seas'. The Emperor announced: "Now all within the four seas are as one family. Let there be mutual trade at the frontier barriers in order to supply the country's needs and to encourage distant people to come."

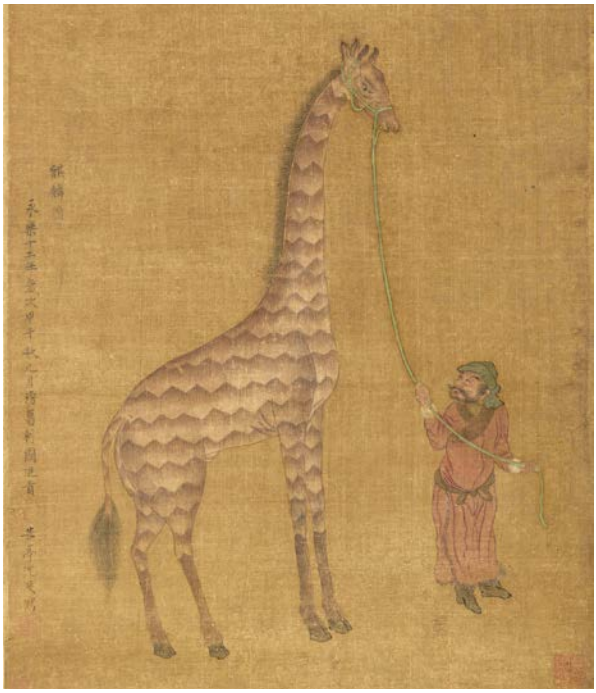
China was essentially an agrarian state that relied on its peasants to produce food, while its rich ruling class enjoyed imported luxuries, such as ivory, while exporting silk and chinaware to pay for such luxuries. As a renowned scholar of China's history explains: "China was an empire without being imperialist". The emperor launched a series of major expeditions that carried up to 30,000 people under Zheng He, a Muslim Chinese captive who had risen to become Admiral, not to conquer the Indian Ocean, but to expand trade.

Zheng He was aware that the Indian Ocean was a multi-religious arena (see the Introduction to Part III). When he arrived in northern Sri Lanka, he planted a unique multilingual multireligious tablet, now preserved in the National Museum of Colombo. The Chinese portion of the tablet praised the Buddhist-Taoist goddess of the sea. The Tamil portion offered similar praises to a Hindu god, while the Persian inscription praised Allah and the Muslim saints. Identical sets of presents were offered to representatives of the three most important religions practised on the island. Such even-handedness was a remarkable gesture of religious tolerance in the multicultural and multireligious mercantile Indian Ocean. Their next stop was the small southwestern Indian state of Calicut, where the Chinese described the Malabari, who included Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and even *Chini Bachegan* (children of Chinese seamen), as "most noble in trade".

During the fourth expedition, a Chinese ship to Bengal saw an African giraffe for the first time. When it arrived at the Chinese court in Nanjing in 1414, it created a tremendous stir. The emperor's philosophers identified it with the fabled *chi'i-lin*, an animal associated with an age of exceptional peace and prosperity, who ate only herbs and did no harm to a living being. According to Jan Duyvendak, a Dutch Sinologist, the African giraffe became, "the emblem of Perfect Virtue, Perfect Government, and Perfect Harmony in the Empire and in the Universe." The following year, an envoy from Malindi on the East African coast, went to offer a "tribute" to China, and it included a giraffe, a "celestial horse" (zebra) and a "celestial stag" (oryx) (Figure 3).

Starting with the fifth expedition in 1417, the Chinese regularly travelled port side to follow the African coast. Zheng He was thrilled by the great variety of animals that these journeys offered. An inscription in China reads like a list in a zoological garden. One of the ships is said to have come as far as Lamu, but was shipwrecked. Chinese sailors are said to have intermarried with the local people, some of whom are said to show Chinese facial features. Chinese archaeologists and geneticists are currently investigating this history.

Figure 3 Tribute Giraffe with Attendant



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The Western counterpart of these expeditions came at the end of the same century when the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean from the opposite side of the world, but they came not as peaceful traders but as crusading conquistadors, with their sails blazing the 'sword and the cross'. They came after a long period of religious wars against Muslim Moors in the Iberian peninsula in 1492. They were also concerned about the monopoly of the spice trade through the Mediterranean, which was dominated by Venetians and Egyptians. Their objective was therefore to outwit the Muslim world and divert the Indian Ocean trade from its traditional routes, through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, to their own maritime route around the Cape of Good Hope.

They therefore launched a crusade in the Indian Ocean in which 'commerce and Christianity' were closely intertwined; the former providing their material motivation, and the latter their ideological justification. Portuguese captains joined, "to conduct war with the Muslims and trade with the heathen." At Calicut, the renowned Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, asked the Hindu Raja to expel all Muslims, but the Raja replied: "It was unthinkable to expel 4,000 households, who lived there as natives, not as foreigners, and who had contributed great profits to his kingdom." The contrast between the two expeditions could not have been more stark. Da Gama's initial arrival was a dismal demonstration of power and diplomacy. His three battered caravels (Portuguese sailing ships), with a total tonnage and crew of 260 men, could have fitted inside one of Zheng He's "treasure ships".

As soon as he reached Mozambique Island, da Gama realized that he had entered a new world of the Indian Ocean. The people he met there were Muslims, spoke Swahili or Arabic, and dressed in fine linen or cotton, "of rich and elaborate workmanship". They traded with the "white Moors", four of whose vessels were in the port. When he offered the Swahili sultan Portuguese hats, corals and other goods, the sultan treated them with contempt, for he was already used to much better quality goods. Da Gama soon showed his true character when he bombarded a number of local vessels.

Keen to find Christian allies, da Gama was told that the mythical Christian emperor, Prester John, resided further north in Ethiopia. He arrived in Mombasa, where he was eager to identify some Hindu Indian traders in the harbour disguised as Christians, and he went on to Malindi (in Kenya) to find a pilot to take him to India. He noted local mariners had compasses, quadrants and navigational charts. Eventually, de Gama found "a Moor of Gujarat" who showed him "a map of the whole coast of India, arranged as those of the Moors are with meridians and parallels in great detail". On his return from India, he begged the ruler of Malindi for permission to erect a pillar with a cross in Malindi, which still stands today.

However, the Portuguese were not merely waving the flag or passing pirates. They developed a grand strategy to destroy the pre-existing system of trade in the Indian Ocean and proceeded to do so with characteristic brutality. On the East African coast, Kilwa, Mombasa and Brava were plundered and torched. Henceforth, trade in the Indian Ocean would supposedly be a Portuguese monopoly, and local merchants could only carry on trading with Portuguese *cartazes* (permits).

However, by the 1580s, the Portuguese had entered their century of decline, challenged along the northern coast by the Turks, who supported their Muslim Swahili brothers suffering under the Portuguese monopoly and religious persecution. This forced the Portuguese to build their powerful Fort Jesus at Mombasa. However, they had murdered the father of Sultan Yusuf, converted him to Christianity, and married him to a Portuguese orphan. Eventually, Yusuf revolted in 1631, dismantled Fort Jesus, and called all Muslims to a *jihad* against the Portuguese. He was forced to retreat to the Red Sea, where he was eventually killed in 1638. This shook the Portuguese control over the length of the Swahili coast.

The rest of the century was one of constant revolts, supported by Omanis, who had expelled the Portuguese from Muscat. In 1652, they sacked the Portuguese settlement on Zanzibar, killing a number of the Portuguese and destroying the church; one of the walls was later used to build what is now the Old Fort on the Zanzibar seafront. In this oceanic battle between two powers, some of the Swahili city states, like fragile shoots caught in the crosswinds between giants, struggled to survive. When almost every other Swahili ruler shifted their allegiance to the Omanis in the final struggle, Queen Fatuma of Unguja in Zanzibar made the mistake of remaining loyal to the Portuguese. She and her entourage were exiled to Oman until 1709, but they were soon allowed to return to Zanzibar and were reinstated as a mark of reconciliation in the Indian Ocean.

Portugal had entered the Indian Ocean with grand designs of dominating half the globe, but it was a small nation of only one and a quarter million people, just emerging from feudalism, and eventually incapable of absorbing and transforming the economic system of the vast Indian Ocean into its own seaborne empire. However, the introduction of armed trading initiated the gradual decline of the once vibrant free trade in the Indian Ocean, conducted in a spirit of economic and socio-cultural interactions, replacing it with trade monopolies and, eventually, colonial and imperial domination.

However, the Portuguese did not abandon Zanzibar and the Swahili coast without leaving their mark. It should be recalled that their dominance lasted only two centuries, and ended more than three centuries ago. Indeed, there were never more than a few hundred Portuguese along the entire coast. It is remarkable that such a small nation could have left such a monumental mark on the history of the region, not only on the Swahili coast but across the entire Indian Ocean.

They had resorted to transporting their criminals to the colonies, who were encouraged to marry local women to both increase their population and spread Christianity. Alternatively, female Portuguese orphans were married to Swahili princes in an attempt to capture state power from the top. The Portuguese were more open to racial and cultural assimilation. As Pearson (1998) stated, they "succeeded when they acculturated, rather than when they tried to dominate."

They were also instrumental in introducing a large variety of South American crops, which now play an important role in the economy and diet of the Swahili, and Africans in general, to this day, such as maize, manioc, potatoes, cashew and tobacco. They also left a lasting cultural imprint on the Swahili language, with nearly 150 Portuguese loan words, including *bandera* (flag), *gereza* (prison, ironically from *igreja*, meaning church), *danguro* (brothel), *mvinho* (wine), *meza* (table), *leso* (handkerchief, *khanga*), *kasha* (from *caixa*, chest or box), and many terms in card-playing (*karata*), which hints at the kind of influence they had. One particular legacy may have been bull fighting, or rather baiting, in Pemba, but the bull is not killed.

The re-establishment of a Swahili city-state

The Portuguese had built a small chapel and a factory on the site of the Old Fort in Zanzibar. As their power began to wane, Omanis were able to exert their dominance, culminating in the expulsion of the Portuguese north of Mozambique in 1698. Queen Fatuma, who descended from a Yemeni Alawi clan, was on the throne, and her palace is said to have been on the site of the present-day House of Wonders (a landmark building in Zanzibar and part of the 'Stone Town of Zanzibar' World Heritage site, inscribed in 2000). The Omanis partially demolished the Portuguese chapel and factory, and incorporated the rest in the construction of what was described by a Portuguese naval captain in 1710 as "a ridiculous little fort". It formed part of the existing Old Fort, one of the oldest standing landmarks in the town. It had three gates, one of which

opened onto the Queen's palace, and another onto the fishing village of Shangani. The fort was eventually expanded and had five towers, apart from the rectangular block at the main entrance. One of the towers was demolished sometime after 1893 to expand the road between the Fort and the House of Wonders; the entrance block was reconstructed in 1946 to open the Ladies' Club.

Queen Fatuma was succeeded by her son Hasan in 1728. He is said to have done much to clear the bush on the peninsula, on which modern Zanzibar 'Stone' Town stands. Subsequently, some Mafazi (from Faza) Arabs from Pate Island in the Lamu archipelago settled in the Mwavi quarter around the Ismaili Jamatkhana, and they were joined by the Shatiri Arabs from Mafia. However, by 1799, the town still had only a few stone houses, the rest of the dwellings were huts made of straw.

According to the anthropologist, John Middleton, the basic social unit of the Swahili was the town (*Mji*). Swahili settlements were of two 'ideal types', situated at opposite ends of a continuum: i) 'stone-towns' inhabited by merchants; and ii) 'country-towns' inhabited by farmers and fisherfolk. This description has sometimes been misinterpreted as a spatial division of every Swahili town occupied by distinct social and ethnic groups, often taking Zanzibar town in the 1950s as a definitive example. However, there is no such thing as a 'stone town' that is not surrounded, even infiltrated, by mud and thatch buildings. The concept of 'stone town' is not Swahili; its translation into Kiswahili (Mji wa Mawe, town of stones) would sound ridiculous to a Swahili ear. The term began to be used only since the mid-1980s when Zanzibar applied for UNESCO World Heritage status. In Kiswahili, it is more appropriately known as Mji Mkongwe (Old Town).

The classic Lamu-type Swahili house was unfortunately lost in Zanzibar during its rapid development in the nineteenth century, but fortunately it has survived in its sister town of Lamu on the Kenyan coast. It was an introverted self-contained structure that provided for social interaction while guarding the household's privacy. There was an 'intimacy gradient' from the most public street to the most private master bedroom. The exterior of the house was modest, according to Islamic Swahili ideals, and only the size of the house and its carved wooden door hinted at the status of the houseowner (Figure 4).

Figure 4 A Zanzibar Indian carved wooden door

© Janet Purdy.

The entrance was through a semi-public porch (*daka* or *baraza*) provided with stone benches, where the houseowner received visitors for a cup of coffee or sweets (*halwa*) (Figure 5). Only close relatives entered the house proper (see Chapter 8, Part III).

Figure 5 Swahili *daka* porch entrance in Zanzibar town

© Abdul Sherriff.

One passed through the inner courtyard, which was open to the sky to permit ventilation and light, and where many of the household chores, such as washing, grinding, hair-plaiting and so on, were carried out. The master bedroom was at the back of the house with its own bathroom. The interior of a Lamu house was elaborately decorated with carved coral or plaster work, with almost entire walls covered with panels or wall niches (*zidaka*). There was a progression in the decoration in that it was designed for the enjoyment of the household rather than for public exhibition, with the master bedroom being the most lavishly decorated room.

These houses were grouped together in *mitaa* neighbourhoods occupied by kin groups. Some of the houses in Lamu were linked above the street by covered galleries (*vikio*) to enable the women of the households to move from one house to the next without being seen from the street. Only a few such houses have survived in Zanzibar, which can be identified by the tell-tale semi-public *daka* porch, such as the Kiponda Hotel, or the covered galleries connecting different houses of the palace complex.

The rise of the Zanzibar commercial empire

The modern town of Zanzibar owes its present form largely to the economic transformations of the nineteenth century. It is situated on a triangular peninsula connected to the main island of Unguja by only a strip of land at the southern end, as well as by a creek to the east, before it was largely reclaimed in the twentieth century.

The town originated as a fishing village on the Shangani peninsula, but recent archaeological excavations have revealed the presence of sizeable stone houses on the site of the existing Old Fort. It was transformed into a typical Swahili town thanks to local crafts and its participation in long-distance maritime trade.

Zanzibar was given an enormous boost during the nineteenth century by the expansion of commerce that encompassed not only the Indian Ocean but also the Atlantic, with the deepest commercial and cultural penetration as far as the Great Lakes in the African interior. Although historians do not like to explain events in terms of 'accidents' of history, it is convenient to discuss the explosive development of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century through three such 'accidents' that occurred at the start of the nineteenth century. They would trigger the development of Zanzibar as the metropole of a vast 'commercial empire', which greatly influenced the architecture of Zanzibar.

The first 'accident' relates to the selection of Zanzibar itself as the capital of the commercial empire. During their struggle with the Omanis and Turks, the Portuguese had built the powerful Fort Jesus at Mombasa. But when they were finally defeated in 1699, the then ruling dynasty in Oman had set up the Mazrui clan as their local governor in Mombasa. However, when the ruling Omani Dynasty was overthrown by the new Busaidi Dynasty, the Mazrui refused to recognize their successors as legitimate. When the new ruler Seyyid Said came to the East African coast to demand allegiance from the Mazrui in 1828, they refused, and even briefly sought 'British protection'.

Unable to dislodge the Mazrui clan from Fort Jesus, Said decided to explore Zanzibar as his base. At the time, it was a small town, but it had a large harbour protected from the northerly monsoon by a ring of small coral islands and by the big island itself from the southerly monsoon. In 1811, it was described as "large and populous". The number of more durable houses was growing every year, some of which were occupied by Indian merchants. The Sultan therefore ordered the governor of Zanzibar to start building him a palace by the sea. It was large but modest, befitting a prince who described himself as "merely a merchant".

The second 'accident' relates to the treaty that Sultan Said had been forced to sign by the British in 1822, prohibiting the slave trade from his East African territories to Mauritius and Reunion. As a result, his subjects, who had previously engaged in the lucrative slave trade, were suddenly cut off from their income. Not only did it cause a drop in the sultan's revenue, it also affected the commercial gains of his subjects. French plantation owners in the Mascarenes had earlier tried to cultivate cloves, smuggled from the Dutch East Indies. However, hurricanes hit the Mascarenes several times a year, and it was thus unfavourable to growing cloves, which require up to seven years to bear fruit and flourish.

Some of the slave traders from Zanzibar had tried to do introduce cloves and, by the time Seyyid Said came to Zanzibar in 1828, cloves were already established on the plantation at Mtoni.

The explorer, Richard Francis Burton, alleges that Sultan Said took advantage of the situation by dispossessing him of his house, which then became the sultan's country palace, and the sultan encouraged his subjects to plant cloves in their own plantations. He thus established cloves as the important agricultural base of his commercial empire, which brought a lot of wealth into the hands of his subjects, as well as to his own coffers (Figure 6).

Figure 6 A Zanzibar carved wooden door

© Abdul Sheriff.

The third 'accident' related to the sultan's coincidental meeting with an American merchant from Salem, Massachusetts, in 1828, who sought new avenues of trade in the Indian Ocean. The merchant complained to the sultan that his customs officials imposed all sorts of charges that made it difficult for merchants to plan their trade. The sultan asked him what he wanted him to do. The merchant replied: "We want a commercial treaty". Without hesitation, the Sultan replied: "bring me one, and I will sign it." A few years later, the American returned with a draft treaty. Thus, Zanzibar's first 'most-favoured-nation commercial treaty' was signed with the United States, fixing duty on all imports at 5%. This treaty set a pattern for all subsequent commercial treaties, and the first American Consulate was subsequently set up in Zanzibar. Previously confined to the Indian Ocean, Zanzibar's trade had now expanded its horizon to the whole of the Atlantic for exports of ivory to make cutlery handles and billiard balls for the affluent classes, as well as cloves for their cuisine, and gum copal for their varnishes. At the same time, Zanzibar and East Africa opened up as far as the Great Lakes to the new textile industries of North America and Europe, and the Merekani cotton cloth. By the mid-1830s, Zanzibar town had a population of 10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants.

In addition, the sizeable slave trade worked the plantations on Zanzibar for the export of cloves, not only to the East but also to Europe and the United States, as well as oil seeds on the coast of Kenya for export to oil-hungry Europe. Enslaved people were also smuggled to the Persian Gulf to work as divers for pearls to satisfy the demand for such luxuries in Japan and Europe, to which these nations conveniently turned a blind eye. Most of the enslaved people came from southern Tanzania, Malawi and northern Mozambique, which were more densely populated and closer to the coast.

The slave trade was therefore concentrated at the southern port of Kilwa, the biggest slave port at the time, rather than Bagamoyo, which is wrongly recognized by the UNESCO Routes of Enslaved Peoples programme as having been the biggest slave port, perhaps because it is nearer Dar es Salaam and therefore more accessible to tourism.

The rise of Zanzibar as the capital of the commercial empire

The Zanzibar harbour thus began to develop, teeming with Indian Ocean *dhows* with their lateen sails from many countries in the East, and square-rigged vessels from the West, carrying all the colours of the rainbow. Here Yankee merchants from New England bargained hard with Hindu traders in their large crimson turbans, or with Khojas (a caste of Indian Muslims) in their long coats. The French haggled with the Somalis for leather hides and sesame seeds from the Benadir Coast, and German entrepreneurs shipped tons of Indian Ocean cowrie shells to West Africa where they served as currency and for decoration. Arab and Swahili caravan traders and porters rubbed shoulders with their African counterparts from the 'Mountains of the Moon' as the mountains in the African interior were known. It was then the capital of an Omani Arab Dynasty that was beginning to be Africanized with Ethiopian or Circassian mothers, a centre of commerce and international diplomacy, a seat of learning and an important dispersal point for itinerant *ulemá* (Muslim scholars) and a gateway to Africa. Through its portals passed not only slaves, spices and ivory but also missionaries, explorers and conquerors.

Barghash, 'the Haroun Rashid of the Busaidi'

Although Sultan Said had built an effective structure for a commercial empire, it was still based on the political structures of an Omani Sultanate at a time when the British were trying to exercise their hegemony over the Indian Ocean. They did so with their powerful navy in order to suppress the slave trade and control the Indian merchant class in Zanzibar, who were considered British subjects with strong family, communal, religious and commercial links with the homeland. While Sultan Said was able to hold the British off during his lifetime, when he died – on his way back from Oman in 1856 – the British Consul began to intervene to ensure succession by a weaker prince. This led to a palace rebellion in which even princes and princesses, like the famous Princess Salme, were involved. The British intervened to install Majid, the sultan's son, who was also quite sick, and sent another more capable son, Barghash, to a brief exile in India; but he was later allowed to return when they thought he had reformed.

Under Barghash, the economy of Zanzibar continued to expand. He had witnessed a devastating cholera epidemic that hit Zanzibar in 1869, when all the shallow wells in the city were contaminated, killing more than 20,000 Zanzibaris. No sooner had he ascended the throne in 1872 then a catastrophic hurricane from Mauritius flattened almost all the clove trees in Zanzibar and drowned all the ships in the harbour. The energetic sultan immediately rose to the occasion and persuaded his subjects to replant their clove trees and rebuild his navy.

This was the moment the British imperial authorities in India chose to force him to abolish the slave trade in his territories. According to the British Consul, with tears in his eyes, Barghash asked the British envoy: "I have two spear-points at my eyes: British friends of my father who want me to stop all slave trade in the name of philanthropy, and my subjects who desperately need even more labourers to re-establish their clove plantations. By which shall I be pierced?" The British envoy could not care less. He ordered the British Navy to blockade Zanzibar if Barghash refused to sign the treaty, contrary to the Anglo-French treaty of 1862 (the Zanzibar Guarantee Treaty) that recognized the independence of Zanzibar and Oman. Barghash swallowed his pride and issued a decree to abolish all slave trade, closing down the open-air slave market at Mkunazini in Zanzibar town. This is the site where the British Universities' Mission to Central Africa built their Anglican cathedral, and where there is a slavery museum today.

After a couple of years devoted to recovering Zanzibar's economy, Barghash surprised the British Consul Kirk by expressing his wish to visit the United Kingdom. The consul was taken aback, fearing that the sultan wished to go to London to complain about how he had been cajoled to sign the treaty. Kirk's only response was that he had received no such instruction from the British Foreign Office. Aware of the perennial rivalry between the two European powers, Barghash calmly replied: "If you do not want me to go to London, I will go to France!" Kirk immediately sent a telegram to London and, within a week, Barghash received an official invitation to visit the United Kingdom from Queen Victoria.

But why did Barghash want to go to London? The British took precautions to prevent him from complaining about the forced treaty, drowning his visit in a sea of official ceremonies, including the Royal Ascot race, but Barghash took it all in his stride. However, as soon as the royal fanfare was over, he embarked on his own mission. First, he visited a hot and dusty arms factory near London. Exiting the building, he gestured towards a massive pile of black coal outside and told his English interpreter that it was their goldmine, pleading with the British not to misuse their military power to oppress other countries. His plea, of course, fell on deaf ears, for the English came, in 'the shortest war in history', to subdue Barghash's son who had tried to claim succession. Barghash then went to the West Midlands to visit their industries, and even stopped in Liverpool, the largest port in the world at the time.

Barghash then took a trip to France. Although he had used it as an excuse to get himself invited to Britain, the French did not appear to have had an agenda. They treated him as a tourist with a visit to the Palace of Versailles, Napoleon's Tomb, a zoo and a circus. The only thing that stirred Barghash's interest was an underground water system positioned four floors below the river Seine in Paris, which brought fresh water to the city and removed wastewater. It seemed to offer a solution to Zanzibar's frequent cholera epidemics. He summoned a water expert from Oman to build him a stone pipe from Mtoni to bring fresh spring water to a huge water tank (in the shape of a big ship) in front of the palace. It was known as Barghash's *waqf* (charity), as his citizens were supplied for free a 'gift of water.' He left a block of 27 shopfront houses at Darajani, also as a *waqf*, to cover the cost of its maintenance for perpetuity.

Barghash then travelled to Egypt, the cultural capital of the Arab World and a fellow Muslim country, and from where Zanzibar could learn more about social and cultural development. He was obviously taken to the pyramids and shown the Nile floods, but he was more interested in the Al-Azhar Mosque, a centre of Islamic theology. He spent the entire day visiting schools that offered courses in Arabic, a medical school, and a girls' school for tailoring and embroidery. In another school, they watched examinations in mathematics, geography, history, music, and in many languages. They also visited a bookstore in Islamic law, grammar, philosophy, engineering, chemistry, poetry, arts, and so on. They then went to a printing press in Bulaq set up by Napoleon, and which led to the introduction of Arabic printing in Zanzibar, probably the first in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1880, two Syrian Maronite Christians arrived to set up a printing press, with which many of the Ibadhi multi-volume *Encyclopedia of Islamic Law* were printed (by the Sultanic Press of Zanzibar) and widely distributed, as far as Oman and central Algeria.

The second Egyptian influence was *taarab* music, which became a prevailing tradition along the entire Swahili coast. The Khedive of Egypt sent a number of musicians to perform at the sultan's court, and they began to train Zanzibari musicians. Later, Barghash sent Muhamad Ibrahim al-Ajamy to Cairo to learn to play the *qanun* (zither), one of the key *taarab* instruments, and he returned to teach others. During Barghash's rule, musicians performed solely in the palace, although they must have played in public performances in the ample grounds in front of the palaces.

Another outcome of Barghash's visit to Europe was the establishment of the sultan's steamship fleet. One of the members of his entourage to London was an Arab captain who was tasked with investigating the feasibility of a fleet, which was eventually assembled by 1883 with eight steamships operated by either German or Arab officers and an Indian crew. He undercut British shipping lines and used the steamships to send cloves to Bombay and Calcutta, bringing back rice on their return. He also gave free passage to pilgrims travelling to Mecca. After the American Civil War, which broke up American trade with Zanzibar, there was also a shortage of currency in Zanzibar as the old Maria Theresa thaler (a silver coin that was widely used as currency in parts of Africa) became increasingly scarce. Barghash therefore introduced Zanzibar's own silver and copper currency (the *pesa*) in the 1880s – the first Zanzibari coinage after many centuries – and the *pesa* was in circulation until the 1950s.

Although Barghash did a lot to improve the public utilities of Zanzibar, he will be best known as the 'Haroun Rashid of the Busaidis', according to the Islamic scholar, Sheikh Abdullah Saleh al-Farsy (1912–1982). He built many palaces, including those at Chukwani (a suburb in Zanzibar), which had distinct Indian architectural features and was connected to the town by a tram. However, the peak was reached with the House of Wonders that was situated on the seafront in the 1880s (Figure 7). Its plan was of a traditional Omani square building, introvert, with galleries facing the central courtyard and long rooms along the four sides.

Figure 7 Beit al-Ajaib, House of Wonders, general view

© Michael Turner.

Figure 8 Beit al-Ajaib, House of Wonders, detail of the wooden door

© Janet Purdy.

However, to this plan he added modern features, including balconies along the outer walls of the building, supported by cast-iron pillars imported from Scotland, and sloping roofs. Unfortunately, however, the palace complex was bombarded by the British in 1896 in 'the shortest war in history', which lasted only 38 minutes, and a Victorian wooden tower was planted on top of the roof, which collapsed in 2000. Its most iconic Indian carved door (Figure 8) was also destroyed, to the great dismay of the people of Zanzibar (Figure 9). The conservation of this famous building is now under way.

Figure 9 Beit al-Ajaib, House of Wonders, detail of the inner door

© Janet Purdy.

The colonial partition of the Zanzibar commercial empire, and of the so-called 'Zanzibar Stone Town'

Unfortunately for Barghash, the Zanzibar commercial empire reached its zenith on the very eve of the European scramble for Africa. He had tried, belatedly, to transform his father's commercial empire into a political one with the help of a modern army, but he was forced to accept German claims on the mainland. He was left with the offshore islands and a ten-mile coastal strip of land, but it also fell under European control when the coast of Tanganyika was 'bought' by the Germans, and when the coast of Kenya eventually came under British control.

By then, Barghash was also suffering from various illnesses, and he felt betrayed by the British and the Germans who had enjoyed favourable terms of trade since the 1850s. A broken man, he went to get treatment in the sulphur baths of Oman, but when told that he did not have long to live, he hurried back to Zanzibar and died in 1888 and was buried in the royal graveyard near the palace. With his death, the independent state of Zanzibar also died in 1890 when it was declared a British Protectorate, another name for a dependent colony.

As a Swahili town at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the major port was still at Mombasa, Zanzibar began as a fairly small town, mostly with wattle and daub houses and a string of small stone houses along the seafront. There were some classic Lamu-type Swahili houses, but they were overwhelmed by new types of housing that came with the development of Zanzibar as the capital of the commercial empire. Only a few tell-tale *daka* entrances remain, including the Kiponda Hotel behind the palace, and the entrance to a house on Gizenga street.

A Swahili house in Zanzibar from the nineteenth century was generally single-storeyed, in which there was a raised platform on one side of the entrance called a *baraza* that was protected from rain and sun by a palm roof, but was otherwise open to the streets. It served as a space where the men of the household received their guests during the day for coffee, or it would be laid out with fruits and vegetables for sale. However, in the evening, when men tended to congregate at coffee houses or mosques, it was often transformed into a lively *baraza* for the women of the neighbourhood and their relatives. On other occasions, these platforms were transformed into more solidly built stone *baraza* along the front wall on both sides of the entrance, which became the model for what are now called 'Swahili houses' in Zanzibar. They were initially roofed with palm fronds, which had to be replaced periodically. Some of the houses of the poorer folk at the time had walls made of the same material. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a British visitor wrote that the town consisted mostly of such buildings, behind a narrow ribbon of stone houses along the seafront.

However, with the development of the commercial empire, which was based on the clove economy and the huge expansion of international trade in the Atlantic, new building traditions were added to the architecture of Zanzibar. Clove production was established when Sultan Said encouraged experienced agriculturists from the agricultural highlands of Oman to establish clove and coconut plantations in the hilly areas of Zanzibar. These Omanis naturally came with their own architectural tradition, which was simple and modest, combined with intense social cohesion within the family and community. They were opposed to ostentation, and their houses were therefore very simple, except for crenellations along the rooftops to protect them from the arrows or bullets of their enemies. The second principle was to protect the privacy of the household. Walls were therefore pierced by small wooden windows with wooden louvers, which allowed the women to see outside without being seen. Every Omani house was potentially defensible, militarily and socially.

The third principle concerned the social cohesion of the community. As a plantation owner, he would have held a particular position in the family, the community and in the town. The residences therefore offered a more varied gradation of social relationships, from the outer *baraza*, in the case of the Swahili, where the men of the household interacted with passers-by for a chat, to more intimate friends and relatives in the *majlis* chamber inside the house, slightly raised above the ground floor for greater privacy. Only the most intimate members of the family were allowed to enter the residential quarters on the upper floors. Most of these Omani type houses are concentrated in certain areas, such as Shangani, but they can be seen all over Zanzibar town, and even across the creek in Ngambo ('other side').

Another architectural tradition was associated with the merchant class from India. Many of them were driven by poverty or periodic droughts in Kutch and Gujarat in northwest India, but they were also well placed thanks to the monsoons that helped them sail to the East African coast. Many of them initially came as single men, living in large *maras* (dormitories), like in Bombay, where they shared kitchen and toilet facilities with other men, returning to India periodically to be with their wives and possibly leaving behind another child from their voyages. This was particularly true of high-caste Hindus, whose religious ethics prevented women from crossing the sea (*Kala pani*, black water) until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the restriction seems to have eased.

Their greatest desire was to secure a foothold along the major bazaar streets, which led from the countryside across the town to the Old Bazaar (*Soko Kuu*) and behind the Old Fort along Sokomuhogo Road (Coconut market), or the *dhow* port at Malindi along Mkunazini streets. According to an American visitor, the market stalls were mere gaps, raised a foot or two above the street. Nevertheless, they were extremely valuable, and most merchants could afford only about 5 m of frontage to establish their shops, which stood shoulder to shoulder, with no side windows.

They were called 'shopfront houses', with the shop located at the street level to exhibit the goods for sale, while their modest residential quarters were pushed to the back of the house or above the shop (Figure 10). Hence the development of the *upper makan, niche dukan* (house above, shop below) type of house, in which the whole width of the house opened up as a shop during the day.

Figure 10 Indian-type 'shopfront' houses

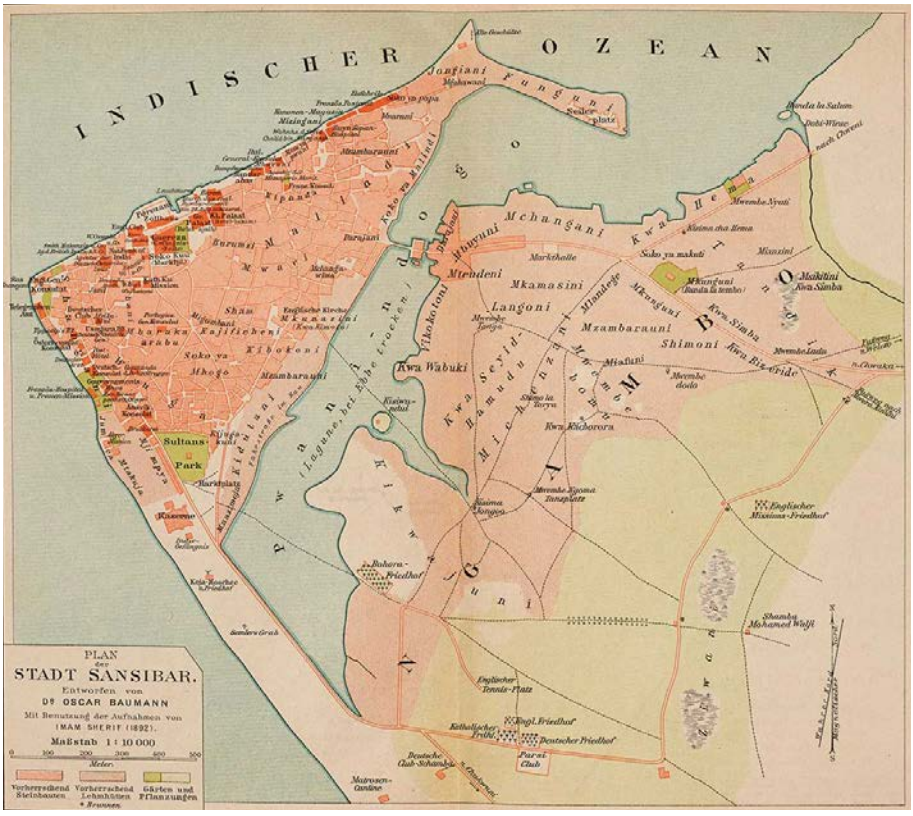
© Abdul Sheriff.

However, some established Hindu merchants came with their assets and began building large and spacious residences by the 1840s. Some acquired or built Omani-type houses, while others built their Gujarati haweli houses. However, they were still governed by what Max Weber called the "Protestant ethic", which in fact referred to universal mercantile ethics of accumulating capital to expand their businesses. Already by the 1830s, one merchant was rich enough to win the five-yearly auction of the customs revenue of Zanzibar. Consequently, some of the merchants began building even more spacious houses with more decorated wooden doors, while still maintaining their mercantile modesty.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Zanzibar town had thus grown into a sizeable cosmopolitan capital of the commercial empire, with at least three recognizable architectural traditions: Swahili, Omani and Indian (Figure 11). Although there was some degree of concentration of the different ethnic types, there was no communal segregation. In 1892, when the first detailed survey was made of house types, in what is now described as the Stone Town, it was found that there were 1,506 stone houses on the peninsula, but there were also 5,179 Swahili-type huts. In other words, the wealthy and the poor, and their stone houses and mud huts, still co-existed all over the peninsula. As late as 1923, according to the British town planner, Henry V. Lanchester, the Funguni sand spit jutting from the peninsula to the north was "covered with irregularly placed Swahili huts", and in 1927, Ukutani, in the centre of the town was still covered with huts, which some described as brothels.

Figure 11 Survey of Zanzibar Town, 1892**

Showing the peninsula on which the Old Town had developed, as well as 'Ngambo', the 'other side' of the reek. Based on *The Zanzibar Archipelago: Results of Exploratory Journey Sponsored by the Geographical Society of Leipzig 1895/96* by Oskar Baumann. Leipzig, 1892.



© Oscar Baumann (25 June 1864, Vienna – 12 October 1899, Vienna), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Section III

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

"

And after (some) days he arrived at the great city of Constantinople. And when Rabban Sauma went into the city, the (Emperor) allotted to him a house, that is to say, a mansion in which to dwell. And after Rabban Sauma had rested himself, he went to visit the (Emperor, Andronikos II) and after he had saluted him, the (Emperor) asked him, "How art thou after the workings of the sea and the fatigue of the road?" And Rabban Sauma replied, "With the sight of the Christian king fatigue hath vanished and exhaustion hath departed, for I was exceedingly anxious to see your kingdom!

Rabban Sauma
Syriac history, 1287

Constantinople is a city consisting of three parts and is triangular in shape and its walls are eighteen miles long. However, most of the city is in disrepair today except for a few gardens, fields and vineyards where grapes and pomegranates are grown. Even though God has cursed this city with disbelief, the Sultan Murad has appointed a Muslim judge (*qāḍī*) who adjudicates between the Greeks and the Muslim merchants since it is a city where trade is widespread. The city has a thousand merchants from all religions and nations, including Arabs and non-Arabs.

ʻAbd Allāh b. al-Sabbāḥ
Nisbah al-Akhbār wa Taẓkirat al-Akhyār,
14^{t}h/15th-century

Chapter 10

Istanbul at the Crossroads

By Paolo Girardelli

Istanbul, a city "where the continents meet" – as advertised in a slogan in the 1990s – has always evoked the encounter of East and West, of Europe and Asia, and the confluence of cultural traditions and experiences from distant geographies. Not only have diverse people, habits, ideas, objects and commodities passed through and met at this crossroads over millennia, but so have storks in the sky and dolphins in the sea, all have found the appropriate station or passage on the Bosphorus and its shores for their seasonal migrations along a North-South axis in the first instance, and East-West in the second. With its strategic, protected position at the junction where the Black Sea reaches into the Sea of Marmara, through the Bosphorus channel and into the natural harbour of the Golden Horn, which favours long-distance trade, Istanbul is both a threshold and a gateway connecting different worlds and civilizations. This chapter explores the monuments, sites and landscapes that have been shaped by changing communities in this urban environment over centuries. It will also show how each community was connected in time to overlapping layers of history, and in space to the distant geographies that were relevant and meaningful for the inhabitants, rulers and the builders of this city. Istanbul resembles no other, yet it presents "an image of all the cities upon earth", as asserted by the Italian writer, Edmondo De Amicis, in 1874.

A satellite view (Figure 1) of Istanbul and a detailed pictorial panorama from the 1840s (Figure 2) helps to conceptualize the visual and topographical framework needed to understand this city's place in a broad, global context of influences and connections. Other images of singular monuments and spaces will zoom-in on specific architectural and artistic elements of this spectacle, combining nature, history and civilizations.

Layered history, global connections, cultural diversity

The satellite view of Istanbul (Figure 1) shows the four main environments that make up the city in time and space. The centre is the so-called historic peninsula (No. 1), with the Sea of Marmara to the south (No. 2), the Golden Horn to the north-east (No. 3), and the walls built by Theodosius II in the fifth century CE to the west (No. 4). Its history dates back to the founding of Byzantium in the seventh century BCE on the hill commanding a breathtaking view of the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus, but archaeologists have uncovered evidence of human presence here since the Neolithic period. Across the Golden Horn, the old Greek colony of Sikay (meaning fig tree) was incorporated into the greater city by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, becoming Pera ('across' in Greek) in the Middle Ages (No. 5). Pera, also called Galata by the Greeks, was a thriving colony of Genoese merchants, some of whom remained there after the city was conquered by Mehmet II (r. 1444–46 and 1451–81) and the Ottomans in 1453. In the Ottoman period, more specifically, the name Galata indicated the settlement within the Genoese walls. Conversely, Pera (only for the Genoese, coinciding with Galata) was the name given to the area on the heights beyond the Genoese walls. Today, this entire area is called Beyoğlu (in Turkish), which, over time, developed as a multicultural, cosmopolitan district with embassies, churches, synagogues, mosques, foreign schools, barracks and, later, theatres, department stores, and stadiums in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even the imperial palace left the traditional site of the historic peninsula – where power had been entrenched for millennia – to move closer to Pera on the European shore of the Bosphorus at Dolmabahçe, attracted by the new centrality of this site.

The shores of the Bosphorus (No. 6) make up the third area or environment (only partly visible in Figure 1). It extends to the Black Sea, measuring roughly 30 km, and was inhabited mostly by scattered communities of fishermen and labourers in small villages until the eighteenth century. In this period, the shores acquired a new status and image with the construction of prestigious Ottoman waterside mansions in some sections, forming continuous, long architectural frontages of picturesque charm. Lastly, on the Asian side, Kadıköy (the old Chalcedon, an ancient maritime town) and Üsküdar (the old Scutari) have maintained a largely sub-urban character, with rural areas still existing up until the twentieth century. Kadıköy (No. 7) was in fact a Greek colony, older than Byzantium, and had a prominent role in religious history.

In the year 451 CE, it was the seat of the famous Council of Chalcedon, which condemned the belief in a single nature of Christ (monophysism) as heresy. Conversely, Üsküdar (No. 8) represented the connection of the city with Anatolia and the Asian side of the empire. In the Ottoman period, it was from this place that the Surre-i Hümayûn, the caravan of gifts sent by the sultan to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, left Istanbul every year with an impressive ceremony. Üsküdar still preserves the many green cemeteries that charmed foreign visitors for their significance as sites of memory rather than gloomy reminders of death, where social gatherings and rituals could be held in remembrance of the deceased.

Figure 1 Satellite view of Istanbul**

Europe to the west, Asia to the East, the Sea of Marmara to the south, Golden Horn (left) and southern section of the Bosphorus (right) in the upper part of the picture

The city has been given many different names over time. The three most famous, Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul, correspond roughly to three broad eras, three empires and four civilizations: Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman-Turkish. The name Byzantium, from the Greek king and colonizer Byzas who came from Megara and allegedly founded the city as a Greek colony in 667 BCE, corresponds to the city's ancient Greek period (667–133 BCE) and its partly Roman period (133 BCE–324 CE). Constantinople is the name referring to the re-founding of the city as a Christian capital by Constantine, the first Roman emperor who embraced Christianity in 324 CE. Constantinople was a second or a New Rome, allegedly built on seven hills and endowed with forums, basilicas, honorific columns, theatres, aqueducts, stadiums and thermal baths, very much like her Western counterpart.

In many ways, it also resembled the monumental cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, with their columnated avenues and oversized temples: Ephesus on the Aegean side of Anatolia; Damascus or Palmyra in Syria; and Gerasa (Jerash) in present-day Jordan. Following Emperor Constantine's epochal decision, the New Rome became the main Roman capital until the year 395 CE when the empire was divided into an Eastern and Western part. This had a profound impact on world history and Constantinople remained the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire until its fall under the Ottomans led by Mehmet II in 1453. Historians commonly call 'Byzantine' the Eastern Roman civilization, stemming from a blend of Roman state structure, Greek language and culture, and Christian religion. According to ancient sources, all 72 languages spoken in the world could be heard in this cosmopolitan metropolis. Seventy-two is a symbolic number, retaining no scientific value today, but revealing the strength of the common perception of this place as a site of global encounters and commitments. The imposing walls, protecting the city on its western side from land attacks (the other sides were protected by the sea and thus had less massive walls), were built in 408–413 by Emperor Theodosius II. The domed basilica of Hagia Sophia (Divine Wisdom) – one of the world's greatest achievements in architectural history – was built by Emperor Justinian in 532–537 on the site of older, destroyed churches, which were also dedicated to divine wisdom. The church of St. Saviour in Chora (today a mosque called Kariye Camii) was decorated in the fourteenth century with elaborate and sophisticated cycles of mosaics and frescos in a sort of proto-Renaissance spirit. These are three of the most famed monuments still remaining from the Byzantine era. On the opposite side of the Golden Horn (a natural estuary, which as we mentioned functioned as a harbour), the Genoese commercial settlement of Galata, developed especially in the 14th and 15th century, was dominated by the famous tower built in 1348, a still-standing monument to the Latin and Western presence in the city.

The main historical focus of this chapter is the Ottoman period, which lasted from 1453 until 1923 when the Republic of Türkiye was founded. In this period, most Christian sanctuaries of the city were gradually turned into mosques, and the capital became a city of predominantly Muslim character but with a very diverse population, largely Christian (especially Greek Orthodox and Armenian) and Jewish (especially Sephardic), in a share of 40%, rising to over 50 in the late 19th century. This ethnic and cultural diversity is one of the keys to understanding how and why Ottoman Istanbul retained and developed its cosmopolitan character and exposure to influences and ideas emerging from distant worlds. Communities rooted in the city had connections with extended diasporas of their own ethnic-religious groups, within or outside the Ottoman Empire: Greek Orthodox subjects with Russia, Egypt or Venice; Levantine Europeans with the West and beyond; Armenians with Venice and the trading posts of Iran and India, even China (Canton) since the eighteenth century; Shi' Muslims with Iran; and Jews, usually but not exclusively of Sephardic/Iberian background (they were accepted into several Ottoman cities after their expulsion from Spain in 1492), with Europe, but also with Iraq, Bukhara or Mumbai.

Following the Ottoman conquest of the city, a local source from the seventeenth century, the Ottoman traveller and writer Evliya Çelebi (1611–1685) wrote:

> *Orders were then issued to all the Vezìrs who were Pashas in Europe and Asia, to send all the sons of Adam from each district to Islambol… The Persians were settled in Khoja-Khan near Mahmud Pasha; the Gypsies (Chinganeh) coming from Balat Shehri are established in the Balat-mahallehsí… the Arnauts (Albanians) near the Silivrì-gate; the Jews from Safat in Khass Kóï; the Anatolian Turks at Uskudar (Scutari)… The Laz from Tirabuzun (Trebizonde) near the mosque of Sultan Bayazìd; the people of Geliboli… at the Arsenal; those of Izmir in Great Galatah; the Franks in Little Galata (Pera); the inhabitants of Sinop and Samsun at Top-Khaneh.*

Some of the communities referred to by Çelebi were, up until recently, or even to this day, still connected to the places he had mentioned: the Jews in Hasköy, the Gypsies in Balat, the Persians near Mahmut Paşa, and the Franks (or Levantines) in Pera. In the Ottoman era, urban development confirmed the centrality of the historic peninsula as the site of power, with its imperial legacy of more than a millennium. The palace of Topkapı was built on the same site as the acropolis of Byzantium, and the hills characterizing the topography of the old city became monumental sites with imperial complexes developed around magnificent mosques. These were visible from the sea as iconic imprints representing the prestige and solidity of the Ottoman Dynasty.

In this period the city was called 'Konstantiniye' (Arabic for Constantinople), Istanbul (from the Greek expression 'is tin polin', meaning 'to the city'), Dersaadet ('See of Felicity'), İslambol ('replete of Islam'), among other names. Western sources continued to use the name Constantinople until the founding of the Republic and beyond, when Istanbul was no longer the capital, having been replaced by Ankara in 1923. Before this, the centre of the city had moved closer to Pera, crossing the Golden Horn in the course of the nineteenth century, and the 'modern' palace of Dolmabahçe (on the European shore of the Bosphorus) had replaced the traditional complex of Topkapı at the tip of the historic peninsula.

Across the Golden Horn, the Genoese settlement of Galata continued under Ottoman rule to be the site of Latin and Western presence, with a more diverse social make-up compared to the Byzantine period. Protected by a walled enclosure, which the Genoese built in successive phases during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Galata had functioned in the later Middle Ages as a crucial station connecting the Genoese possessions of the Eastern Mediterranean to the colonies of the Black Sea, such as Caffa in the Crimea. With its links to inner-Asian trade through the north-eastern Black Sea, this Genoese legacy of medieval origin was another aspect of the extended, trans-continental networks created by the Silk Roads. Even Christopher Columbus, before engaging in the adventure that would accidentally lead him to the discovery of a new continent while seeking a new path to East Asia, had developed his maritime experience in the service of Genoese trade in the Black Sea.

When the Ottomans conquered the northern shores of the Black Sea, and gradually all the Genoese posts in the Eastern Mediterranean, the centrality of Galata declined, but former Genoese connections and commitments were in part inherited by the new rulers who often employed renegades, converts of Italian origin, to develop their maritime power. Not by chance, the Ottoman arsenal of Istanbul, where slaves of mostly Christian background worked on the construction and repair of ships, was built in an area adjacent to the Genoese Galata. This powerhouse of maritime industry was a bustling hub where the most diverse human experiences could be encountered. The enslaved people working in the arsenal also worked on construction sites, thus enhancing the cosmopolitan/plural character of Ottoman architecture.

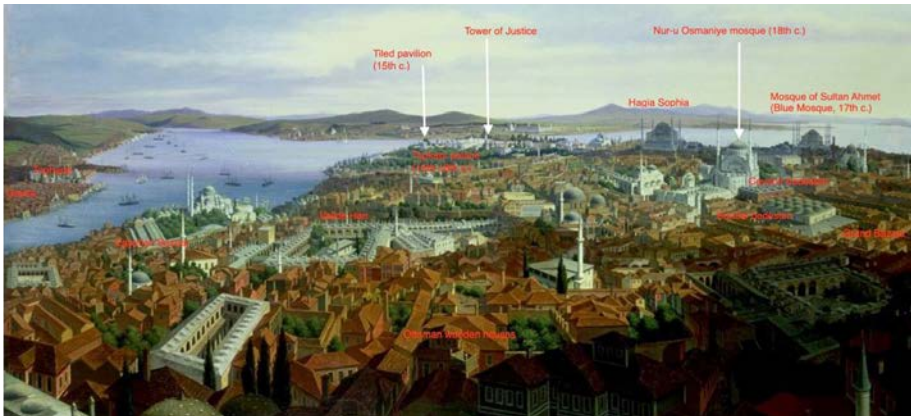
In parallel to the decline of Genoese influence, Venice – for centuries the rival of Genoa in the control of Mediterranean and west-Asian trade – increased its presence and influence in the Ottoman world. The Venetian embassy moved from the southern shore of the Golden Horn to the newly developing region of Pera, beyond the walls of Genoese Galata. For centuries, this was the centre of a thriving merchant community, where knowledge, cross-cultural contact, intelligence, diplomacy and commerce developed side by side. It may be argued that the synergy that existed in the early-modern era between Istanbul and Venice represented the Western limit of the system of exchanges created by the Silk Roads.

A view from the minaret: monuments in context

Leaving aside the satellite picture, let us take a closer look by stepping back in time some 180 years. In 1842, the Austrian painter Hubert Sattler was allowed to climb one of the four minarets of the Süleymaniye Mosque in the heart of the historic peninsula, built by Sultan Süleyman roughly three centuries earlier. From this privileged point of observation, he sketched a panorama of the Eastern half of the walled city (Figure 2). Eventually, the visual records of this experience were elaborated as paintings, part of a 'Cosmorama', a large, moveable display featuring spectacular views of the most celebrated sites in the world. With the aid of this panoramic image, now in a private collection, we can travel in time and space, and explore the manifold historical layers and architectural marvels of a city that defies standard categorization.

From the top of the minaret, the view dominates the lower, eastern part of the so-called historic peninsula of Istanbul. The palace of Topkapı, built in the 1460s by the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II, who had conquered the city in 1453, appears as an enclosure with scattered structures surrounded by green areas and dominated by the Tower of Justice. The palace was in fact a residential complex where different functions and rituals (of judicial, military, diplomatic, educational, religious and domestic nature) were housed in diverse spaces and buildings, connected by walkways, gardens, courtyards and gates.

Figure 2 Hubert Sattler's *Cosmorama*, 1844


Tower of Justice
Nur-u Osmaniye mosque (18th c.)
Tiled pavilion (15th c.)
Hagia Sophia
Mosque of Sultan Ahmet (Blue Mosque, 17th c.)

© Hubert Sattler, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

As historian Gülrü Necipoğlu argued, rather than relying on verticality and grandiose size, this centre of power impressed subjects and official visitors as it was isolated and segregated from ordinary life behind a succession of thresholds and enclosures, increasingly difficult to cross as one proceeded from the public urban space to the domain of the ruler. The deserted gardens, silent courtyards and porticoes, with overwhelming distances from one section to the other, impressed the visitor with a sense of awe and inaccessibility. Horizontal expansion rather than vertical dominance was the main driver in this kind of monumentality.

The Italian writer and traveller Giovanni Maria Angiolello (1451–1525), who had been enslaved while taking part in the defence of the Venetian island of Negroponte (today, Greek Euboea) from Ottoman attack in 1470, spent several years in the service of Ottoman armies, becoming treasurer to the sultan. He wrote that the royal enclosure of Topkapı contained three pleasure pavilions designed in three different styles: Persian, Greek and Turkish. This diversity evokes the latitude of the empire and the cosmopolitan commitment of Sultan Mehmet II as a patron of culture and the arts. While there is no agreement on the location and appearance of the pavilions of Turkish and Greek style, as they have been lost, we can be reasonably sure that the köşk or pavilion in the 'Persian style' was the Çinili Köşk (or Tiled Pavilion), completed in 1472 and still standing in the enclosure of the Topkapı Palace (Figure 3). Today, it is a major landmark and tourist attraction of the city's early Ottoman history, albeit significantly restored in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

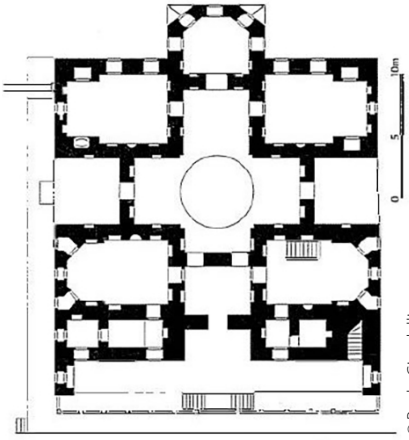
It is known that Mehmet II could employ artists and scholars at his court from places as distant as Central Asia and Venice, from where the painter Gentile Bellini, who produced the famous portrait of Mehmet II (now in the National Gallery in London), arrived in 1480. The astronomer Ali Kuşçu, from his hometown of Samarqand, settled in Istanbul at the service of the Conqueror in 1470 after also having lived and worked in Herat and Tabriz. Indeed, these were important centres of encounter and exchange along the Silk Roads.

Figure 3 The Çinili Köşk, or Tiled Pavilion, in Topkapı palace (c. 1472)

3a. View of the façade

© Cemal Emden.

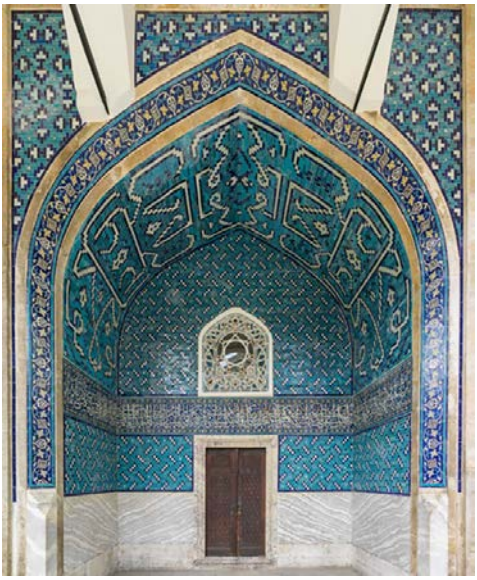
3b. Floor plan



© Paolo Girardelli.

Drawing by Paolo Girardelli after Sedat Hakkı Eldem, Köşkler ve Kasırlar, 1974.

3c. Ceramic decoration of the main gate



© Cemal Emden.

The presence of Ali Kuşçu at the Ottoman court represented a broader cultural connection between Istanbul, Central Asia, the Timurid legacy, and the multiple routes of the Silk Roads. This connection may also have influenced the design of the Tiled Pavilion, which was built only two years after the arrival of Ali Kuşçu, but whose architect remains unknown. Scholars have noticed a remarkable similarity between the cross-shaped plan of this Ottoman pavilion and the many instances of centralized structures in the architecture of Central Asian caravanserais and palaces.

The mosque of Bibi Khanum in Samarqand, built by Timur (Tamerlane) around 1400 – one of the largest and most magnificent temples of the Islamic world during the fifteenth century – is mentioned as a possible reference for the use of glazed bricks in the decorative patterns of the Tiled Pavilion. With its decorative use of masonry, including glazed bricks, its inlaid works of coloured ceramic tiles, its centralized plan (a cross inscribed in a square), and the interlacing ribs and sharp edges in the design of its vaults and dome, this building seems to transfer a piece of Central Asia to the very heart of Istanbul. Rather than Iranian or Persian, the style associated with this pavilion may be more correctly described as Timurid, though the legacy it represented certainly also extended to Iran. The present portico with stone columns in the façade belongs to an eighteenth-century renovation. Before this, its columns would have been wooden, a detail that emphasized the Central Asian character of the building.

Very close to the enclosure of Topkapı stands the church of Hagia Sophia, which dominates the south-eastern end of the peninsula (Figure 4). It was built by Justinian in 532–537 as the main house of Christian worship of Constantinople, and turned into a mosque soon after the conquest of the city by Mehmet II in 1453 (called Fatih, 'the Conqueror', a title he earned following the conquest of Constantinople). This was the largest domed space to be found in the Mediterranean and Europe when it was constructed; a monument that remained unparalleled for one thousand years and whose aura of magnificence and awe has overwhelmed visitors and worshippers from every part of the world. Like the Pantheon in Rome or the Umayyad mosque of Cordoba in Andalusia, Hagia Sophia has stood, over the centuries, to shelter different faiths, to serve changing civilizations, and to inspire diverse communities and individuals.

Figure 4 Hagia Sophia.

4a. A recent view of the exterior

© Arild Vågen, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

4b. The interior in a lithograph by Gaspare Fossati, published in 1852

© Gaspare Fossati (artist, 1809-1883) Louis Haghe (lithographer, 1806-1885) Adam Cuerden (restoration), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

After the Ottoman conquest in 1453, this sanctuary, which had already exerted some influence on Ottoman architecture, became a model of sacred space and monumentality for the Ottoman rulers. They sought to inscribe clear imprints of their political power, their inheritance of an Eastern Roman imperial legacy, and their religious commitment to Sunni Islam in the landscape of their new capital. Churches are usually dedicated to saints, to aspects and manifestations of Christ, divinity, and the virgin Mary. In the absence of this kind of devotion, Ottoman mosques bore the names of their patrons, encoding their memory forever in the urban fabric and landscape. Examples include the mosque and complex of Sultanahmet or Ahmediye (popularly known as the Blue Mosque) from Ahmet I (1603–1617), the Selimiye of Edirne from Selim II (r. 1566–1574), and the Süleymaniye complex for Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566). The basilica of Hagia Sophia is the only monument that has preserved its old name after its conversion into a mosque, probably out of respect for its millennial history and because it was not named after a particular saint; it was dedicated instead to the abstract concept of divine wisdom. If Mehmet II looked eastward for inspiration for the layout of the Topkapı Palace and the design of the Tiled Pavilion, he certainly wanted to revive the aura and legacy of Hagia Sophia in an Islamic framework when he commissioned his mosque and monumental complex on the site of the church of the Holy Apostles. This was a Byzantine sanctuary largely in ruin at the time of the conquest, where the emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire had been buried alongside the relics of the Apostles of Christ.

The goal of reviving the layout of Hagia Sophia in the central building of Mehmet II's complex was not fully achieved and we only know how the mosque looked from old visual records, as it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1766 and rebuilt in a different shape. According to the architectural historian Spiro Kostof, the complex of Mehmet II re-enacted the grandeur and authority of ancient Rome for the first time after the Middle Ages. With its large domed mosque, flanked by religious schools and other functional structures in a rigidly symmetrical order, this was a piece of urban design, which further boosted development around its site. Here Mehmet II had established the type of imperial complex that would continue to be a landmark of Ottoman sovereignty until the eighteenth century.

These complexes, later called *külliye* but usually named *imaret* at the time of their construction, included religious and medical schools, baths, public kitchens, libraries, markets and other structures. They were organized around a monumental mosque, usually divided into three main spaces: the columnated courtyard (a Mediterranean element, also present in the old Hagia Sophia, which had existed since pre-classical times in the Eastern Mediterranean), the prayer hall, and the monumental graveyard situated behind the mosque. Built with the spoils of military conquest, and including religious but also civil and commercial structures, the imperial complexes built after the conquest of Constantinople resembled in spirit, if not in form, the old Roman imperial forums, bearing the names of their victorious patrons and indicating, by their sheer existence, the expansion of the empire.

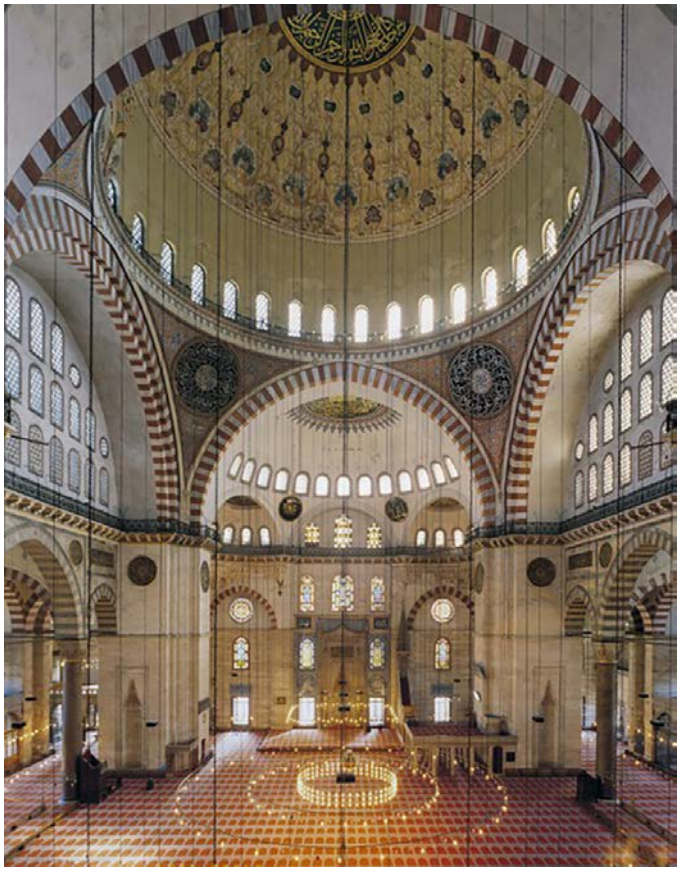
Nothing reveals these kinds of commitments as clearly as the complex of Süleymaniye, which was developed in the years 1550–57 by Sultan Süleyman, known in the West as 'the Magnificent' but essentially remembered as Kanuni or 'Lawgiver' in Ottoman history (Figure 5). The complex was constructed by a heterogeneous team of free paid workers, members of the army and slaves, with an approximately equal share of Christians and Muslims. It was centred around a mosque inspired by the layout of Hagia Sophia, but displaying substantial originality in comparison to the model.

Figure 5 Süleymaniye mosque and complex

5a. Aerial view of the mosque and the adjacent library

© Cemal Emden.

5b. Interior



© Cemal Emden.

5c. Detail of the south-western façade

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Süleyman was a new Justinian (also remembered as a lawgiver) and, like his Eastern Roman predecessor, a new Solomon allegedly, the biblical king evoked by Süleyman's name. These three rulers – Solomon in the tenth century BCE, Justinian in the sixth century and Süleyman in the sixteenth century CE – constructed three temples that symbolized entire civilizations and defied time.

For the design and implementation of his major monumental complex, Süleyman relied on the skill and experience of the only Ottoman architect/engineer from the early modern period whose life and works are well-known and documented as a coherent body: Mimar Sinan (ca. 1490-1588). Born in Anatolia near Kayseri from a Christian family and forced into the *devşirme* (forced recruitment of Christian youths to serve the palace and the army), he was a janissary who started his architectural career as a military engineer, designing bridges, roads, fortifications and other structures for the management of warfare. Appointed chief royal architect at the age of 50, he lived for about 100 years, practically as a contemporary of Michelangelo. Sinan is the typical example of Ottoman investment in human resources irrespective of origin, birth or social status. His masterpiece is the Selimiye Mosque designed for Selim II in Edirne in 1568–74 and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in June 2011.

From the Byzantine model built by Justinian nearly 1,000 years earlier, in the mosque of Süleyman, Sinan retained the basic layout of the prayer hall: a central, large square bay covered by a dome and flanked on the longitudinal axis by two semi-domes over bays half the size. Whereas the interior of Hagia Sophia does not at first sight reveal its structural logic and design, arousing a feeling of mystery and longing for something 'beyond' what we see, in the Süleymaniye the geometrical, sharp outlines of both interior and exterior seem to be based on rational control and structural clarity. One aspect of the decoration of the Süleymaniye deserves attention as something that stems from exposure to the flow of materials and artefacts across Eurasia: the Ottoman ceramic tiles produced in Iznik since the late fifteenth century. The tiles reached a 'classical', canonical stage of development in this period from the point of view of technique and decorative language. In the interior of Ottoman mosques, these tiles replaced the mosaics of the Byzantine tradition, and they were also used as a medium to display Koranic inscriptions in elegant styles of calligraphy, a form of artistic expression especially advanced and developed in a religious context, avoiding the representation of human figures. With their basic palette of white and intense blue and turquoise, the tiles' floral, somewhat naturalistic, motifs in green and red were largely the Ottoman response to the global diffusion of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain in the late medieval and early modern period.

Houses and markets

Coming back to the Istanbul section of the *Cosmorama* by Hubert Sattler (Figure 2), we may now explore other aspects of the urban landscape represented in this image. The undertaking of the *Cosmorama* paralleled the invention of photography, which began its development in the late 1830s, and may be seen as a painter's response to the challenge of this new technology. The vivid colours, elaborate detail and sharp focus of Sattler's panorama, like those of other painters, were much closer to a real experience of 'seeing' the site than any possible photographic reproduction, at least in that period.

During the nineteenth century, the superior status of painting over photography was defended not only on artistic grounds but also on account of the painter's ability to evoke a landscape, or any other subject, with a stronger sense of real presence. This being said, a painter was obviously able to manipulate the object of his representations with greater articulation and flexibility than a photographer. What did Sattler wish to emphasize specifically, with his representation of the imperial Ottoman capital from the heights of a minaret? The landscape seen from the Süleymaniye minaret appears to articulate the contrasts created by architectural types, their construction materials and colours. A sharp distinction between residential buildings and monuments dominates the view. This distinction existed in other early modern cities of Europe and Asia, but did not create such a visual contrast. Here, a polarity between wood and masonry as construction materials is implied, between roofs of red tiles and domes covered with lead sheets, and between white stone and brownish wood or other colours. Colourful houses, or brown wooden ones, on the one side (fragile, ephemeral, exposed to the risk of fire, and continuously replaced over time) and white imperial monuments on the other (permanent, everlasting, stately), with the chromatic exception of markets built with layers of stone and red bricks (and therefore not entirely white). As we have seen, these imperial landmarks included palaces, mosques, markets, public baths, libraries, hospitals and charitable institutions. The houses, instead, were modelled on a type of residential architecture developed in connection with distant geographies. Flexible and functional, the architecture of the Ottoman house became an iconic element of the urban landscapes of the empire only during the eighteenth century and later (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Wooden houses from the late Ottoman period in Arnavutköy, Istanbul

Photo courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Istanbul - D-DAI-IST-R 32.644.*

Varying in layout and decoration from region to region, this kind of house was characterized in general by a centralized plan, with a central hall giving access to peripheral rooms. The rooms were in part overhanging on the lower floor, creating a structure that expanded in height. In the denser settlements, overhanging parts might be limited to a characteristic bow window called *cumba* or *şahnişin*. The peculiar disposition of rooms created roofs with a characteristic, concavo-convex articulation. In Sattler's view from the minaret, several houses display rooms that appear to be covered by singled-out sections of the roof. The abundance of windows, made possible by the timber construction system, rendered interior spaces luminous and salubrious. The same type of house was used by the diverse communities living in Istanbul: Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, Jews and, until the nineteenth century, Europeans or Levantines (Westerners who were either born in the Ottoman Empire or chose these lands as home). However, in principle, and up to the first half of the nineteenth century, the colour of a house was connected to the ethnoreligious identity of its inhabitants. The bright red of some houses in Sattler's image may indicate Muslim dwellers, whereas yellow was reserved for Greek Orthodox settlers, and two different hues of blue to Armenians and Jews. Sumptuary laws, controlling aspects of material culture in many pre-modern Eurasian societies, also extended to the dress code, but they were not always respected and were discontinued with the set of reforms promoted by sultans Mahmut II (r. 1808–1839) and Abdülmecid (r. 1839–1861).

Scholars have explored the many possible sources, borrowings and cultural traditions that concurred to give shape to this kind of house, diffused from the Balkans to Central and West Anatolia and, marginally, to Syria and North Africa. The centralized plan may have had Central Asian origins, but the timber construction system can be found in both Byzantine and Caucasian urban contexts. The typical bow-window was used in many contexts, with timber being the main construction material. It also appears in Maltese urban houses, not primarily made of wood, but in which, according to recent scholarship, it was imported by slaves of Ottoman background working on construction sites. It can also be found in some parts of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, where this element of design was transferred from the Ottoman lands by Armenian merchant communities. The Ottoman bow-window blurred the line between public and private space, projecting the interior of the house into the street life. As such, it allowed women – traditionally excluded from urban life outside the home – to watch and somewhat experience street life without leaving the protection of the house.

The other important element in the make-up of the Ottoman urban landscape, visible in the *Cosmorama*, is the space given to commercial life. In the painting, at least four rectangular structures developed around open courtyards can be seen, with small domes corresponding to the modular cells or rooms used by merchants and travellers. These were the *hans* or urban caravanserais, a type of building that – more than anything else – translated the images, feelings and actions of long-distance trade along the Silk Roads into urban life.

These kinds of marketplaces were essential elements in the urban fabric of all the cities that had contributed to trade and exchange in Eurasia and the Mediterranean, from Bukhara to Aleppo and Damascus, from Cairo to Isfahan, and from Istanbul to Samarqand and Delhi. But they could not exist without their non-urban counterpart. This was especially true since the rule of the Great Seljuks in Iran, the Rum Seljuks in Anatolia, the Mongol Ilkhanid and the Timurids in Central Asia, when most sections of the Silk Roads, connecting these cities across desert lands, high and desolated plateaus or the verdant landscape of Western Anatolia, were gradually equipped with large or minor caravanserais at a distance of approximately 20 to 25 kilometres. In fact, this was roughly the distance covered by a caravan of camels and travellers or merchants in one day. The main difference between these caravanserais and the urban *hans* (visible in the panoramic image) was the limited space allocated to animals and storage, the development of elevated structures due to the scarcity of land (at least two or three storeys, and smaller courtyards compared to the road caravanserai), the specialization of merchandise in each of them, and the fact that they could also be used – and still are – for artisanal or small-scale production in small ateliers.

The manifold spaces organized around the Grand Bazaar (Figure 7) – a large commercial area in the heart of the historic peninsula, which developed between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries – clearly indicate how much the commercial life of the city was both site specific and globally connected. Eleven main gates provide access to this structure, which may reasonably be considered as having anticipated the arcades and passages developed in nineteenth-century Europe or present-day shopping malls. Some of the names given to gates include Kuyumcular (jewellers), Sepetçiler (basket makers), Örücüler (weavers); to alleys, Halıcılar (carpet dealers), Kürkçüler (furriers), Serpuççular (scavengers); and to the *hans*, Cebeciler (arm repairers and dealers), Perdahçı (glazers) and Varakçı (goldsmiths). At the centre of this labyrinth, the two oldest structures are the multi-domed *bedestens*, which originally housed the most valuable goods and trades and were thus covered. In Sattler's *Cosmorama* (Figure 2), they are visible on the right side of the painting (Sandal Bedesten and Cevahir Bedesten). The orientation and layout of the covered and open-air alleys in the present bazaar area, flanked by shops and giving access to no less than 17 *hans*, emanated from the need to connect these two spaces to the lower commercial areas of Mahmut Paşa and Eminönü near the Golden Horn and the harbour facilities.

Half-way between the *bedestens* and the shore stood a large commercial structure with a mosque in its main courtyard and a tower of Byzantine origin in its north-eastern corner, the Valide Han (Figures 7b and 7c), meaning Caravanserai of the Queen Mother. In this case, Kösem Sultan (ca. 1590–1651), the wife of Sultan Ahmet I, of Greek origin, funded this han in 1650. When Sattler elaborated his panorama, the Valide Han – clearly visible with its mosque (on an oblique axis to observe the ritual orientation towards Mecca) – was already associated with the Iranian community of merchants and residents of Istanbul.

Figure 7 Commercial spaces

7a. The Grand Bazaar (Kapalı Çarşı) in a late nineteenth century, photograph

Creator: © Jean Pascal Sèbah, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

7b. and 7c. The Valide Han

Photos © Paolo Girardelli.

7d. The Egyptian or Spice Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı)

© Cemal Emden.

Its mosque is still attended by Iranians and Muslims of the Shi' confession. Today, this structure is in a dilapidated state, but Sattler's depiction may serve to inspire and stimulate its proper restoration and reuse. Another Queen Mother, the Valide Turhan Sultan (ca. 1627–1683), daughter-in-law of Kösem, was instead responsible for the funding and construction of the L-shaped market and the adjacent monumental mosque, visible in the panorama to the left (north) of the Valide Han. The mosque, called the New Queen Mother (Yeni Valide) Mosque, and the market, known as the Egyptian Bazaar or Spice Bazaar (Figure 7d), were built in the 1660s in a very central and prestigious area, previously inhabited by a Jewish community after expensive actions of expropriation and demolition. Egypt and the commerce of spices, which arrived in Istanbul mostly via Cairo and Alexandria, are inscribed in the history of this site, a monument among many landmarks evoking the range of experiences made possible by the Silk Roads.

Epilogue: the other side. From the Silk Roads to the Eastern Question

Not many years after Sattler, another artist with a more local background depicted the city from a different viewpoint. Jean Brindesi was a Levantine with Spanish and Italian connections. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery of Feriköy, not far from Pera, and had a studio in the heart of Pera near the junction of Galatasaray. From this location, he created the lithographic view represented in Figure 8, which is part of an album called *Souvenirs de Constantinople* published in Trieste in 1855 and again in Paris in 1860.

Figure 8 Jean Brindesi, view of Pera and the historic peninsula

© Jean Brindesi, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

A plate from *Souvenir de Constantinople*, 1855. From right to left: the Russian embassy, built in 1837-1845, flanked to the left by the Tower of Galata, as it had been recently restored after the 1831 fire; the French embassy, rebuilt after the fire in 1839-1844; the wooden Austro-Hungarian embassy, spared by the fire and still retaining its late eighteenth-century character. On the opposite side of the Golden Horn, from left to right: Topkapı Palace and the Tower of Justice; the basilica/mosque of Hagia Sophia; the mosque of Ahmet I (Blue Mosque); and the mosques of Beyazit II and Süleyman I.

The striking difference of this image, when compared with Sattler's representation, is the dominance of a very different type of building in place of the Sultanic landmarks of the Cosmorama. In Brindesi's vision, the 'other side' of the city takes centre stage, where the landmarks dominating the surroundings with their stately, imposing presence are not traditional mosques but modern embassies. Most of them had recently been re-built in monumental stances after the fire of 1831, which erased much of the residential fabric of Pera. Up until that date, embassies of the Western powers in the Ottoman capital had been largely made of timber structures of the local type, with few exceptions.

The Russian building, designed by Gaspare Fossati and built in 1837–1845, was literally a piece of St. Petersburg transmitted to the shores of the Bosphorus. This embassy initiated a new process of monumentalization in the architecture of diplomacy, in which Western nations (along with Russia) grappled to display their influence and power in the context of the so-called 'Eastern Question'. This is generally described as the set of contentions and rivalries that emerged around the decline of the Ottoman Empire, with Russia, France, Great Britain, the Habsburg Empire and Italy (after its unification in 1861) as the major protagonists. A new urban landscape emerged in Pera from these kinds of competitive attitudes. Churches that up until the previous century had been scarcely visible from the public street and concealed behind walled enclosures were now emerging as relevant landmarks. While the Orthodox and Armenian churches, both in Pera and in the historic peninsula, had the backing of the local Patriarchs of Russia and the recently constituted kingdom of Greece, the Catholic churches were protected by France, Austria or Italy. New migrants from Western Europe and the Balkans (Christians, Muslims and Jews) were attracted by the development of Istanbul as a modernizing capital city that required all sorts of expertise and a more or less specialized workforce.

In this period, with a somewhat overstated account, but based on direct observation, the writer Edmondo De Amicis (1846–1908) described the colourful crowd crossing the bridge of Galata, connecting the two shores of the Golden Horn:

> *The crowd passes in great waves, each one of which is of a hundred colors, and every group of persons represent a new type of people. Whatever can be imagined that is most extravagant in type, costume, and social class may there be seen within the space of twenty paces and ten minutes of time. Behind a throng of Turkish porters who pass running, and bending under enormous burdens, advances a sedan-chair, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, and bearing an Armenian lady; and at either side of it a Bedouin wrapped in a white mantle and a Turk in muslin turban and sky-blue caftan, beside whom canters a young Greek gentleman followed by his dragoman in embroidered vest, and a dervish with his tall conical hat and tunic of camel's hair, who makes way for the carriage of a European ambassador, preceded by his* running footman *in gorgeous livery. All this is only seen in a glimpse, and the next moment you find yourself in the midst of a crowd of Persians, in pyramidal bonnets of Astrakan fur, who are followed by a Hebrew in a long yellow coat, open at the sides; a frowzy-headed gipsy woman with her child in a bag at her back; a Catholic priest with breviary staff; while in the midst of a confused throng of Greeks, Turks, and Armenians comes a big eunuch on horseback, crying out, Larga! (make way!) and preceding a Turkish carriage, painted with flowers and birds, and filled with the ladies of a harem, dressed in green and violet, and wrapped in large white veils; behind a Sister of Charity from the hospital at Pera, an African slave carrying a monkey, and a professional story-teller in a necromancer's habit, and what is quite natural, but appears strange to the new comer, all these diverse people pass each other without a look, like a crowd in London; and not one single countenance wears a smile.*

The spectacle observed by De Amicis was a product of the liberalization of habits and rules regarding dress codes and behaviours, and the invisible borders within the city during the nineteenth century. It was also linked to a new mobility introduced by the railways and by steam power in maritime connections. In previous periods, communities had been less visible and exposed to the gaze of tourists or outsiders. Not only Pera but also the historic peninsula was affected by these global processes of change, and a modern form of cosmopolitanism gradually replaced the Ottoman system of plural allegiances and backgrounds that had been connected for centuries to the workings and dealings developed around the Silk Roads.

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Chapter 11

Venetian Perspectives on the Silk Routes

By Deborah Howard

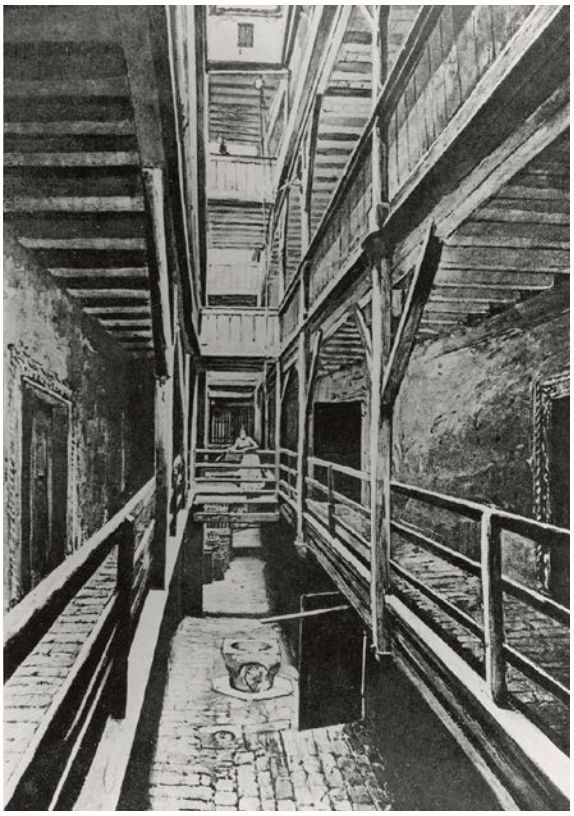
The purpose of this volume is to explore the transmission of architectural ideas, but we need to recall that buildings are rooted in their context, both physically and culturally. How might a Venetian traveller convey information about the cities and buildings encountered along the Silk Roads? In medieval and Renaissance Venice, the acquisition of architectural ideas and techniques from afar relied on movable forms of communication, such as written descriptions, sketches, small models and illuminated books. Merchants recounted their experiences in letters from overseas, returning travellers retold their adventures in the home and in the marketplace, and merchant handbooks were circulated among travellers. The large number of stay-at-home Venetians who invested money in individual trading voyages increased the appetite for information. But memory plays tricks on the retelling of images – as psychologists have shown – and recollections of exotic features tend to be exaggerated, while more ordinary sights are imprecisely imprinted in the mind.

Introduction

In 1908, *The Burlington Magazine* published an elegiac article entitled 'The demolition of the warehouse of the Persians in Venice'. The building concerned was a run-down wooden lodging house adjoining the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (Figure 1).

> *"It was in sooth a shut-in, gloomy spot, and yet the heavy air and dim light seemed in keeping with the Eastern associations which haunted it, while it required no play of fancy to clothe those walls with the carpets and hangings that Persian merchants brought in the olden time to Venice to see, or to exchange for wares that were chiefly to be found in Western Markets."*

Figure 1 Venice, the so-called 'Fondaco dei Persiani' before demolition in 1908



From Ferdinando Ongania, *Raccolta delle vere da pozzo in Venezia*, 1911.

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How could such a decrepit, low-prestige structure hold such exotic associations? Why should gloom and dim light be so redolent of the dazzling sunlit cities of Central Asia? Was Venice really frequented by merchants from Persia? It is difficult to trace the origins of this tradition, seen through the mirror of later Orientalism. What the quotation does illustrate, of course, is the strong oriental association still felt in the fabric of the city of Venice, which was compared in 1844 by the English novelist Charles Dickens to "the wildest visions of the *Arabian Nights*."

In his description of Venice, compiled between 1493 and 1530, the Venetian diarist, Marin Sanudo, declared: "It is worthy of note that, just as they have been merchants from the beginning, so the Venetians continue to be from year to year." Significantly, in contrast to other European elites, Venetian patricians were not primarily landowners but international traders. Throughout the Middle Ages, their economy depended, first and foremost, on overseas commerce, especially in the emporia of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Silk Roads and the trading networks of Asia. As a result, their mentality was both acquisitive and cosmopolitan. From the East, Venetian merchants imported spices, aromatics, textiles, furs, gemstones and other precious commodities to be exchanged for wares, such as wool, metals and wood, from Northern Europe for export to the Eastern Mediterranean (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Laden camel, relief on façade of Ca' Mastelli, Cannaregio, Venice

© Deborah Howard.

The adoption of foreign elements into Venetian traditions continued throughout the culture of the maritime Republic, ranging from Arabic words in Venetian dialect to culinary traditions. Imported pigments allowed Venetian artists to become celebrated colourists, while musical traditions from the East informed the development of instrument-making and inspired compositional motifs. Throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern periods, the exchange of portable objects led to the transmission of craft techniques and visual characteristics between Venice and its Islamic trading partners, especially in glassware, metalwork, bookbinding and textile manufacture. Building techniques, however, were less mobile. Except during the short period of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187), few Venetian craftsmen from the building trades sailed to the Eastern Mediterranean.

By contrast, within the vast territories of the Asian khanates, sultanates and caliphates, Muslim craftsmen travelled freely between the rulers' semi-nomadic courts, exchanging building traditions across large distances (Figure 3).

Transmission was facilitated by the early development of paper manufacture in Asia, allowing the use of drawings to record plans and decorative details. It is conceivable that some Venetian travellers may have acquired such images. Of course, certain elements, such as tile patterns, were easily transmitted in two dimensions, whereas the characteristic *muqarnas* (honeycomb-like vaults of Islamic architecture) were unrecognizable when drawn on flat paper, except to experts.

Figure 3 *Building the Great Mosque of Samarqand*, illustration by Behzad for the *Zafarnama*, late 1480s

© Bihzād, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

John Work Garret Collection, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, fols. 359v-360r.

As this chapter will show, Venetian architecture was far more susceptible to influences from distant lands when a shared typology made it relevant. Although Chinese artefacts made their impact in portable media, such as in porcelain and silk, there seems to be no significant architectural imprint of the Far East in Venetian buildings owing to the great distances and the contrast with local building traditions, as well as the cultural gulf. Conversely, the architecture of Central Asia from the Black Sea to Iran aroused wonder and inspired emulation. Merchants imported ideas as well as material goods from many different directions (including Europe and North Africa as well as Central Asia) and, consequently, Venetian architecture is an eclectic mix of influences from a wide range of sources.

The beginnings of Venetian trade with the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia

A deeply meaningful event in the history of Venice was the theft of the body of St. Mark from his burial place in Alexandria in 828/829, at which point the Evangelist replaced the Greek St. Theodore as the principal patron saint of the Republic. Symbolically, this marks the beginning of Venetian emergence from Byzantine domination. The fact that Venetian merchants were able to smuggle the relic out of the Egyptian port without attracting attention indicates that their presence in Alexandria was in no way unusual. At this time, the testament of the Venetian doge, Giustiniano Partecipazio, drawn up in 829, bequeathed personal investments in trading voyages ("money put to work") to his heirs, as well as gold, silver, spices and ornaments.

By this time, the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire were already contracting as the various Muslim dynasties, on the margins, expanded their territories. While Byzantine power waned, ever-opportunistic Venetian traders began to establish profitable trading links with Islamic merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean, joining their overland 'caravans' into central Asia. These convoys of merchants, often accompanied by thousands of camels, horses and mules, ensured safety in numbers. A stunning profit of 120% on a trading venture by caravan could be expected. Well-established overland trading networks provided the infrastructure for their travels, as the Persian traveller, Nasir-i-Khusrau, reported in 1052 on his arrival in Isfahan with 9,000 camel loads: "When we entered the city no-one noticed our arrival; there was so much room that there was no difficulty in obtaining food and lodging."

Several precious objects of Muslim origin in the treasury of the ducal chapel of San Marco testify to the Venetian Republic's widening trading horizons at this early date. After accession into the treasury, such objects were adorned with precious Byzantine-style mounts so as to assimilate them into the new Christian context. A fine example is a beautiful turquoise-blue glass vase encircled with running hares in low relief, now believed to have been made in Iraq in the mid-ninth century. The presence of this rare artefact in the Treasury underlines the established trading links with Central Asia by this date. At the same time, the route to Asia through Egypt and the Red Sea remained important, as suggested by a precious rock-crystal jug in the Treasury inscribed with the name of the Fatimid caliph, al-Aziz Billah, and dated to 975/6. The treasures of San Marco even include an amphora of the "great king Ataxerxes" made of Egyptian diolite, which was probably brought from the ancient site of Persepolis. Archaeologists believe that the winged lion, which stands on one of the giant columns in the Piazzetta, framing the seaward entrance to Piazza San Marco, may be an ancient chimera from Central Asia or Anatolia. It has been compared, for instance, to an Achaemenid gold rhyton (a drinking receptacle) from the sixth to the fifth century BCE, which is now in the National Museum, Tehran. Another theory assigns its origins to the fourth or third century BCE, although the winged lion has been altered several times over the centuries.

The period of the Crusades heralded new commercial opportunities for Venice when the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in 1099. During the following period of Western rule, Venetian families took up residence in crusader ports, such as Acre and Tyre, often occupying former Muslim homes, thereby becoming acquainted with local building traditions. This was the only period when significant numbers of Venetian women and children took up residence in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Venetian merchants were always ambivalent about the ethos of crusading, preferring to retain their established contacts with the emporia of the Islamic lands. After the fall of Acre in 1291, they quickly resumed their former trading agreements with the Muslim rulers. The wording of the commercial treaties strongly suggests that Venetian merchants enjoyed privileged status in the Eastern Mediterranean. Because of their long-established presence, they were allowed to dress in local clothes and to travel with caravans of Muslim merchants. Sent on their first trading voyages in their teens to learn Arabic and book-keeping, and to sharpen their commercial acumen, young Venetian patricians became experts in trading practices and, at the same time, acquired familiarity with the emporia of the Near and Middle East. This blurring of cultural boundaries fostered the import of exotic urban characteristics into the architecture of Venice.

Because of its distinctive townscape, the art historian, Giuseppe Fiocco, once compared Venice to a "colossal *suq*". As in the great emporia of the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia, its prosperous merchant class, bustling markets and cosmopolitan crowds reflected its commercial vitality. Moreover, the city shared with Middle Eastern cities its densely built-up labyrinths of angular, narrow, dead-end streets. Private courtyards and walled gardens afforded privacy to its palaces, and the architecture was enlivened by elaborate ornaments, rich materials and colours, with exotic skylines decorated with pinnacles, crenellations, rooftop terraces and lofty bell-towers.

Venetian commercial links in Central Asia

The Fourth Crusade of 1204, in particular, greatly expanded the Republic's trading opportunities after the Venetian doge, Enrico Dandolo, diverted the fleet to sack Constantinople. For the next half century, the Republic of Venice ruled three-eighths of the metropolis. After the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire in 1261, Venetians lost no time in renegotiating the former trading privileges. This period strengthened the existing networks through the Black Sea and into Central Asia, despite fierce competition from the Genoese. Marco Polo's father, Niccolò, and his uncle, Maffeo, set up a base in Soldaia (Sudak) in Crimea in 1260. Another uncle, also called Marco, had a house in Constantinople, which was probably acquired after 1268, although by 1280 he had returned to Venice.

We have a fascinating window into the life of a Venetian merchant in Iran in the later thirteenth century from the will of a certain Pietro Vilion. Drawn up in Tabriz in 1263/4, it gives details of the merchandise in his possession. Vilion was trading in partnership with his father, Vitale (who outlived him), but he also carried goods belonging to various other Venetian trading ventures known as *colleganze*. These were temporary companies established for each individual voyage to provide capital from multiple investors, a highly effective way of spreading the risks of trade and raising large sums of capital.

At his death, Vilion's possessions (some carried on behalf of other Venetians) included beaver furs and various kinds of European cloth from Venice, Lombardy and Germany. He had already purchased sugar and gems with the proceeds of earlier sales. Most impressive was the quantity of luxury objects from Venice in his possession, including a number of items of rock crystal (a bottle, two chandeliers and three cups). He also possessed a highly decorated ceremonial saddle adorned with green silk and precious stones, as well as a chess set, and a backgammon set of crystal and jasper, inlaid with silver and jewels, which may have been either Eastern or Western.

By the time of Pietro Vilion's demise in Tabriz, the Mongol Empire's subject regime in Iran, known as the Ilkhanate (1256–1353), was often in conflict with the seat of Mongol power in China. The Mongol incursions had begun with the invasion by Chinggis Khan in 1219, and he resumed in 1255–60 under his grandson Hülegü Khan, who sacked Baghdad and killed the Abbasid caliph before setting up the Ilkhanid rule in Iran. Eventually, in China, under Khubilai Khan, the Mongols would establish the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368). The idea that the whole Mongol realm from Central Asia to the Pacific coast was harmonious and unified is something of a myth. Nevertheless, the spread of Mongol power across Central Asia helped to stabilize overland commerce along the Silk Roads. Marco Polo's journey to China in the late thirteenth century, as well as the earlier visit by his father and uncle, would take advantage of this new stability.

Marco Polo

The emblematic Venetian explorer of the Silk Roads was, of course, Marco Polo (1254–1324). He made his epic overland journey to China in 1271–1295 in the company of his father and uncle, who had already travelled to China in 1261–1269. Because of the fame of his vivid narrative, dictated in French to the romance writer, Rustichello of Pisa, while they were both imprisoned by the Genoese around 1298/9, Marco Polo's journey has acquired exotic connotations and has even aroused disbelief. Yet his family's mercantile ventures from their base on the Black Sea coast are well documented, even if Marco himself inserted some passages derived second-hand from other travellers. Indeed, the first-hand recollections of the places Marco Polo visited along the route provide a convincing illustration of a Venetian traveller's personal reflections on foreign lands.

After all, any traveller will pay closer attention to new and strange experiences than to familiar features. As Italo Calvino recognized in his poetic novel *Invisible Cities* (1972), Marco Polo described each new city by analogy with the Venetian townscape. Polo travelled as a merchant rather than an explorer, always eager for commercial opportunities, and impressed by the abundance of the markets along the route.

Significantly, Marco Polo omitted the Black Sea coasts from his narrative because these ports were already well known in Venice. From Trebizond on the Black Sea, where the Venetians maintained a thriving trading post, it was a mountainous but well-trodden journey southeast to Tabriz where the Venetian merchant, Pietro Vilion, mentioned earlier, had died in 1263/4. With his merchant's eye, Marco Polo praised the commercial life of Tabriz:

> *The people of Tabriz live by trade and industry; for cloth of gold and silk is woven here in great quantity and of great value. The city is so favourably situated that it is a market for merchandise from India and Baghdad, from Mosul and Hormuz, and from many other places; and many Latin merchants come here to buy the merchandise imported from foreign lands. It is also a market for precious stones, which are found here in great abundance […]. The city is entirely surrounded by attractive orchards, full of excellent fruit.*

For Venetians on the Silk Roads, luxury objects, like those owned by Pietro Vilion on his death in Tabriz, constituted a form of international currency. This is also illustrated by the legends surrounding Marco Polo's return to Venice.

By tradition, the Polos, on their return from China wearing rough Tartar-style clothes, had acquired, "something of the Tartar in their faces", and had almost forgotten their native Venetian dialect – so much so that their family hardly recognized them. According to this anecdote, later recounted by a neighbour, they went home and changed into rich textiles, gave presents of cloth to their servants, put on a banquet for their relatives, and showed off the jewels sewn into their old travel clothes, astounding everyone.

Marco Polo's account is a valuable guide to Central Asia for he was clearly very familiar with its customs, and Persian was probably one of the four languages he spoke fluently. Ilkhanid Iran itself was a region that was culturally and ethnically distinct, both from the Steppes of Asia to the East and from the Arabic-speaking lands to the West. Both Persian agriculture and trade earned Marco Polo's admiration:

> *In the cities there are merchants and craftsmen in plenty, living by trade and industry. They make cloth of gold and silk of every sort. Cotton is grown there in abundance. They have no lack of wheat, barley, millet, panic-grass and every type of corn, besides wine and all kinds of fruit.*

The fact that the overland trails to China should be called the Silk Roads highlight the importance of the trade in silk. According to the copious inventory that accompanied his will of 1324, Marco Polo owned a white Tartar-style outfit, a Mongol headdress, pieces of white and yellow silk from Cathay (China), silken cloth decorated with strange animals, and bedcovers with Tartar embroidery.

Like other travellers, Marco Polo saw the rest of the world by a process of analogy with his native city. Sometimes his narrative makes specific and quite detailed descriptions of architecture, especially when he encountered a surprising and alien structure, whereas more familiar mercantile townscapes aroused less attention. In his account of his stay at the court of the Great Khan in China, Polo describes two magnificent imperial palaces: one of marble, and the other, a portable structure built entirely in wood with a gilded interior richly adorned with beasts and birds. Intriguingly, he explains that the wooden palace could be erected and dismantled at will.

The property owned by the Marco Polo family in the Venetian parish of San Giovanni Crisostomo survives only in part because the family palace was destroyed by fire in 1598, and a theatre – later called the Teatro Malibran – was later built on the site. Archaeological excavations conducted in 1998 used radiocarbon dating to estimate the date of the Polo palace to around 1295, precisely the year of the three Polos' return. This strongly suggests that the travelling merchants invested some of the profits of their journey into the purchase and extension of their Venetian house at San Giovanni Crisostomo. As already noted, they are said to have returned with precious stones sewn into the hems of their garments, and the dating of the palace would seem to make this report believable. Sadly, however, we know little about the appearance of the palace.

It has been suggested that the original property (with the tower and Byzantine archway that still survive today) may have been acquired from Vitale Vilion, father of Pietro (who died in Tabriz, as mentioned earlier), later corrupted to Milion, the name given to the surviving court. A legal document explains that by 1339, the *domus magna* had been subdivided among various heirs, each with rights to the various entrances, staircases, wells and latrines. There were at least two storeys above the ground floor, each with a *portego* or shared great hall running through the core of the house in the traditional Venetian manner.

The fourteenth century

Venetian trade continued to thrive during the fourteenth century, despite the intense rivalry with the Genoese for commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean. A pact with the Ilkhanid rulers in 1320 opened up trade with Iran, and – by about 1324 – there was a Venetian consul in Tabriz. The flourishing Venetian colony in Tana on the Black Sea at the mouth of the river Don gave access to Russia and the steppes of Central Asia. According to the foundation agreement of 1333, the Venetians were allowed to construct the stone buildings of their colony themselves. Surviving records kept by the colony's priest-notary, Benedetto Bianco (between 1359 and 1363), testify to the crucial role played by Venetian merchants based in Tana in the slave trade. Most of the enslaved persons purchased were aged between 8 and 25, mainly of Tatar origin, but also some Circassians, Russians and Mongols, and even one Chinese girl. Girls made up around three-quarters of the total number. Although the Venetians did not actively procure enslaved peoples, they did buy them in the markets of Tana for export to Europe. The sale agreements indicate that numerous Venetians were then resident in Tana.

Already in 1306, Venice had negotiated trading privileges in Ilkhanid Iran because of its merchants' long-established presence in the region. A growing concern during this period, shared by both the Ilkhanids and the Venetian Republic, was the expansion of power of the Mamluks, rulers of Egypt and Syria from 1250 until 1517. The presence of a perceived threat between them led to a desire for cooperation. The trading agreement with the Ilkhanids was renewed in 1320 when the Venetian consulate in Tabriz was established. This treaty guaranteed safety for overland caravans, and even allowed the building of Christian monasteries.

The unification of the Mongol Empire under the Yuan Dynasty in 1304 began to make travel along the Silk Roads much smoother. Indeed, an Italian merchant handbook from 1340 declared the road to Cathay to be safe "by night and day". Franciscan missionaries had set up stations along the route to China. As a result of the greater mobility, Chinese figures started to appear in religious fresco cycles found in Italy. For example, in Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua (1303–1305), in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Martyrdom of Franciscan Friars* (ca. 1340) in San Francesco in Siena, and in Andrea da Firenze's *Ecclesia Militans* (1365–8) in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Moreover, Christian sects, such as the Nestorians, also known as the Church of the East, had a long-established presence across the entire width of Asia.

Remarkable evidence of the increasing use of the Silk Roads by Italians in the fourteenth century survives in the form of two Christian tombstones discovered in Yangzhou, China. The first of these, unearthed in 1951, is the funerary slab of Caterina Vilion, daughter of the late Domenico Vilion, which bears the date 1342 (Figure 4). This family may be descended from the Venetian Pietro Vilion, who made his will in Tabriz in 1264. Although the slab is similar in its decorative ornament to local Islamic tombstones of the time, the incised images of the *Virgin and Child* and *Scenes from the Life of St. Catherine* reflect familiar Christian subject matter. The tomb of her brother, Antonio, dated 1344, was found in the same area a few years later. The point to underline is that travel along the Silk Roads must have become exceptionally safe and habitual by this date because, as a rule, Venetian women rarely joined their menfolk on commercial expeditions. This security was certainly facilitated by the presence of Christians: in Yangzhou in 1322, the Franciscan missionary friar, Odorico da Pordenone, recorded the existence of a Franciscan monastery, as well as no fewer than three Nestorian churches.

Figure 4 Tomb of Caterina Vilion (died 1342), Yangzhou, Marco Polo Museum

© Harvard-Yenching Institute.

From Francis A. Rouleau, 1954. The Yangchow tombstone as a landmark of medieval Christianity in China. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3/4, pp. 346–65, Plate 1.

The most explicit representation of the corporate identity of the Venetian ruling class is to be found in the seat of government known as the Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace) adjoining the ducal chapel of San Marco (Figure 5). As explained earlier, the Republic was governed by a mercantile patriciate; its membership was formally defined by the so-called 'Serrata' (or closing) of the Great Council (or Maggior Consiglio) in 1297. The families who belonged to the ruling nobility would be listed in the so-called Golden Book, and every male member over the age of 25 was supposed to attend the weekly meetings of the Great Council in the Doge's Palace.

In the aftermath of the Serrata, attendance at the Great Council became a duty rather than a mere privilege. Hence, in response to the growing number of nobles, the Republic decided to rebuild the south wing of the Doge's Palace to house a larger council chamber. This new wing, begun in 1341, faces onto the waterfront where merchant galleys and seaborne travellers arrived from the East. Poignantly, the longstanding importance of overseas trade had been thrown into sharp relief by a painful dispute with the Papacy in 1320 when an embargo from Rome forbade Venetians to trade with Muslims. Merchants' wills from the period convey the intense emotional impact of this decree, which led to the excommunication of those who ignored it. In 1343, the Doge of Venice addressed a petition to Pope John XXII to plead for the resumption of trade with Muslim trading partners. In this letter, he stressed the importance of the Black Sea trade and claimed that, because of a temporary dispute there, it was vital to reinstate the Egyptian galley route:

> *From those regions [i.e. the overland routes from the Black Sea ports] our merchants have been accustomed to derive the greatest gain and profit, since it was the source of all trade both in exporting our [wares] and in importing theirs.*

Finally, in 1344, a compromise was reached and Venetians were allowed to resume their trading ventures, subject to the purchase of a licence from Rome.

Figure 5 Venice, Palazzo Ducale, south wing, begun in 1341

© Deborah Howard.

In the wake of this new concession, the design of the palace celebrates the wide trading horizons of the ruling patriciate. In the first place, the building reflects the Republic's desire to evoke the biblical palace of Solomon in Jerusalem, as if to appropriate the Old Testament and the king's virtues of wisdom and justice. The description of Solomon's palace in the *Book of Kings* mentions several features that are replicated in the new wing of the Doge's Palace. These include the location of Solomon's residence at the back of the courtyard, the large stones at the base and walls of the fine dressed stones above, the cedarwood panelling in the interior, and – of course – the twin giant columns outside. Since the time of the Crusades, Solomon's palace had been wrongly identified with Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, which in reality bears only a slight resemblance to the Doge's Palace as built, but its poorly remembered image in a Venetian crusading manifesto of about 1320 seems to prefigure the design of the new palace.

The eclectic decorative details of the Doge's Palace, located at the fulcrum between the trans-Alpine connection to the North and the maritime galley-routes to the East, allude to the patriciate's expansive trading contacts. In the markets of the Rialto, precious commodities imported from the Eastern Mediterranean were exchanged for goods brought from Northern Europe by German traders. Thus, the Gothic elements, such as the pointed arches and the quatrefoil traceries, make overt reference to the Republic's Northern European trading connections. Yet the design is also replete with Eastern motifs drawn from the Islamic world. The throne-room of the Mamluk sultan, Iwan al-Kabir, built in 1333/4 in Cairo (destroyed after 1825), had a similar design, with an arcade of pointed arches at ground level, a large wall pierced by windows above, and a crenellated roofline. That the palace of the Venetian Doge should evoke this Mamluk throne-room reflects the desire to identify with their principal trading partner in the Muslim world, in open defiance of papal restrictions. The ornate rooftop crenellations of the Doge's Palace (totally unsuited to military defence) resemble the skylines of Egyptian mosques of the period, such as the Sultan Hassan Mosque in Cairo (1356–63). But the façade also embodies a clearly articulated reference to Central Asian visual language in its lozenge tilework. This diaper pattern encloses the very room in which the newly defined Venetian Great Council assembled every Sunday afternoon. The lozenge motif derives from the Seljuq tradition of the tenth to the early twelfth century when diamond shapes were traced in relief in the brickwork, as seen, for example, in the Jurjir portal of the late tenth-century mosque of Sahib al-Kufa in Isfahan. Soon the Ilkhanids, who ruled Iran from 1218 to the mid-fourteenth century, began to convert the diamond pattern into coloured tilework, which spread widely across Central Asia.

For instance, in Yazd, a similar pattern of tilework adorns the dome of the Great Mosque (Figure 6), which was completed in 1334, just seven years before the work on the Doge's Palace began. Marco Polo had visited Yazd in 1272 and called it a "very fine and splendid city and a centre of commerce." In the Doge's Palace, the palette of Verona's marble and white Istrian stone contrasts with the blue-green water in Venice, just as the blue and turquoise tiles in Yazd are offset by the sandy colour of the arid hills around.

In the Doge's Palace, the variations in the tone of the central tiles in each lozenge create a shimmering surface, like a mirage in the desert. Anyone familiar with Central Asian stretches of the Silk Roads – and there were increasing numbers of overland travellers at this time – would have been aware of the reminiscence embodied in this daring new building, so different from the fortress-like communal palaces of other Italian states in the same period. Even when the Doge's Palace was badly damaged by fire in 1577, it was restored to its fourteenth-century design in recognition of its deep-rooted commercial and political significance.

Figure 6 Yazd, Great Mosque, 1325–1334

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The capitals of the ground-floor arcade of the Doge's Palace, attributed to the sculptor Filippo Calendario, present an encyclopaedic body of knowledge drawn from a wide variety of sources. Significantly, one capital bears the heads of a Persian, a Turk, a Tatar, an Egyptian and a Goth, among other peoples. Another capital is decorated with kings and emperors, including an image of the ancient Persian king Darius, flanked by Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. Not only do these portrait heads refer to powerful rulers of the past, they also embrace the huge geographical expanse of the Roman, Persian and Greek empires, still the destinations of Venetian travelling merchants.

The infrastructure of trade

By 1362, Venetians on the Silk Roads were numerous enough for chance meetings to occur when caravans encountered each other along the route. These convoys carried very large numbers of people and animals, as well as a huge quantity of merchandise. The Venetian envoy, Josafat Barbaro, who was in Iran in 1473–1478 at the time of the Aq Quyunlu ruler, Uzun Hasan, estimated that a caravan might include as many as 4,000 horses, not to mention camels, oxen and castrated colts.

Venetian overseas trading settlements usually centred around a trading post (a complex of warehouse, inn and living quarters) known as a *fondaco* (pl. *fondaci*) where travelling merchants were accommodated. This distinctive typology extended across the whole Mediterranean region and into Central Asia, and was known by a different name depending on the region. In North Africa, it was called a *funduq* (the root of the Venetian word *fondaco*). In Egypt, it was known as a *khan* or *wakala*. In Constantinople, it was called a *han*, and on rural overland routes, a caravanserai. The building type dates back to ancient times: as early as the fifth century BCE, the Greek writer, Herodotus, described the lodgings for travellers along the major commercial routes, spaced at one-day intervals. On sparsely populated overland tracks, these trading posts housed any passing traveller, but in the cities, the *fondaci* were usually assigned either to certain visiting nations or to particular commodities.

All these buildings shared specific characteristics: a central courtyard with a well above an underground cistern for the storage of water; storerooms for merchandise, and perhaps stabling on the arcaded ground floor; and separate lodgings connected by continuous open loggias on the upper floors overlooking the court (Figure 7). The entrance to the *fondaco* was protected by a heavy door locked by the host nation at night to ensure the security of the foreign colony and its merchandise. Shops often occupied the ground floor of the outer perimeter of the building. The water reservoirs were sometimes open to the sky, creating an attractive amenity, especially in desert regions. The Venetian traveller, Josafat Barbaro, left a memorable description of a caravanserai in Isfahan in 1474:

> *It has many great and notable antiquities of which pride of place goes to the one with a square pool containing water one* passo *deep, clear, clean and good to drink, around which is a walkway surrounded by columns, with their vaults, rooms and innumerable lodgings for merchants and their merchandise; this place is locked at night for the security of the goods.*

Figure 7 Caravanserai of the mother of Shah Sultan Hussein

From Pascal Coste, *Monuments modernes de la Perse*, 1867, pl. XXXII.

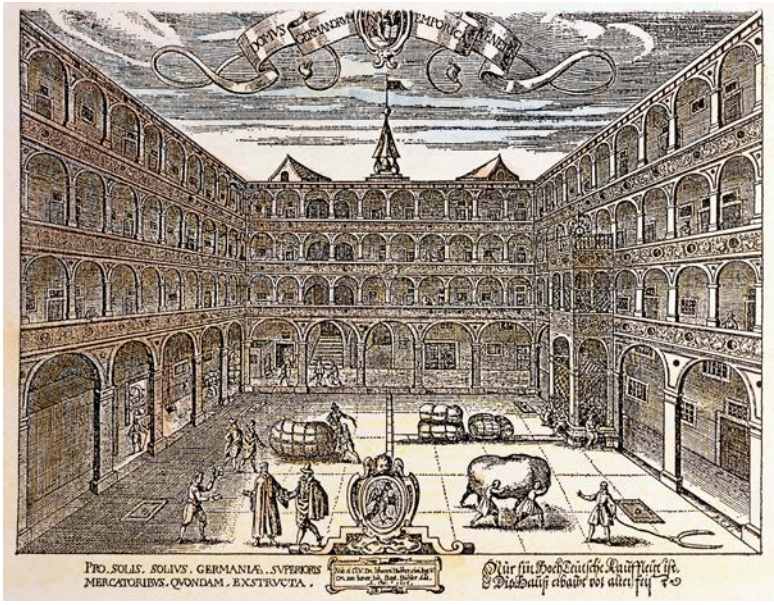
© Pascal Coste, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

In Alexandria, the Venetian Republic was the only nation to be allowed two *fondaci* on a long-term basis, although the exact locations are no longer identifiable. In other overseas trading posts, such as those in Acre, Damascus and Aleppo, some of the local facilities, including the bakery, chapel, bathhouse and consul's residence, extended beyond the walls of the *fondaco* into the surrounding quarter. In Damascus, several resident Venetian merchants had long-term residences of their own where they also accommodated other visitors. Nevertheless, the *fondaco* remained the heart of each Venetian expatriate community, usually housing the residence of the consul.

In Venice itself, some of the *fondaci* provided storage for specific commodities such as flour. Because of a monopoly that forbade non-Venetians from trading in Eastern commodities at the Rialto, there were no significant communities of Islamic merchants in Venice before the late sixteenth century. Meanwhile, Christian immigrants from the Adriatic and Greece could establish *scuole* or guilds, either by adopting an altar in a church or by building a small community meeting hall, but these followed local Venetian building traditions. In contrast to the *fondaci*, arranged around a central courtyard, the *scuole* were simple two-storey halls with gabled ends and pitched roofs.

The most significant *fondaco* for foreign traders was the German merchant colony known as the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on the opposite side of the Grand Canal from the Rialto market. German traders provided the principal market for the abundance of Eastern merchandise imported into Venice. The cluster of old buildings depicted in Jacopo de' Barbari's bird's-eye view of 1500 was destroyed by fire in 1505, but was quickly rebuilt at the expense of the state over the following three years (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Venice, Fondaco dei Tedeschi, erected 1505–1508



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Its newly regularized layout replicated the familiar, long-established typology of the trading posts of the Mediterranean littoral, the Near East and Central Asia. Like a *funduq*, *khan* or caravanserai, the new Fondaco dei Tedeschi was arranged around a central courtyard above an underground cistern, with storage on the ground floor and lodgings on the upper floors. The reference to a shared typology is underlined by its resemblance to the almost contemporaneous Wakala al-Ghuri in Cairo, built in 1504–1505 (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Cairo, Wakala al-Ghuri, erected 1504–1506

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The mixed commercial and residential typology of the *fondaco*, combining warehousing with lodgings, has led to the adoption of the term *casa-fondaco* to describe the traditional Venetian merchant's palace. In reality, however, the deep plan with the main courtyard placed at the rear distinguishes these homes from the true *fondaco* or trading post. Nevertheless, it is clear that Venetian merchants used their houses as the headquarters of their trading businesses and stored imported goods on the ground floors, like the caravanserais, where they lodged during their mercantile expeditions.

Fifteenth-century Ottoman expansion and the rise of diplomacy

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Mamluks, the Persians and the Venetians were all deeply alarmed by the dramatic growth of Ottoman power. The Venetians were already experienced in diplomatic negotiation thanks to their long-established network of overseas trading posts, each headed by a resident consul (known in Constantinople as the *bailo*). Resident overseas ambassadors or consuls sent frequent dispatches to the Senate in Venice, creating a highly efficient mechanism of information-gathering and cultural transmission.

After the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, the Venetian Republic enhanced its ambassadorial efforts to defend its territories from further Turkish incursions. The diplomatic balancing act often brought Venetian and Persian interests closer together, situated as they were on either side of the highly contested lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. Their shared wariness about Mamluk power has already been mentioned. Nevertheless, Venetian merchants eventually established a fruitful symbiosis with the Mamluk sultanates. Because the main Mamluk emporia lay inland, in cities such as Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo, they depended on Venetian ships to transport their merchandise to the markets of Europe.

The three Venetian ambassadors who travelled to Iran to the court of the Aq Quyunlu leader, Uzun Hassan (r. 1452–1478), to negotiate an alliance, have left well-documented accounts of their journeys. By this time, the Mongol rule of China had been superseded by the powerful Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), and travel across Eastern parts of the Silk Roads had become more difficult. The overland journey took 300 days, that is, a two-year period for the round trip. By this time, few Venetians travelled as far as China, although in Tana in 1474, one of the ambassadors, Josafat Barbaro, was surprised to bump into an old Venetian noble called Niccolo Diedo wearing Chinese-style clothes. Nonetheless, Venetian weights and measures were still in use in Tabriz and Trebizond, indicating the continued presence of Venetians in these markets.

The first Venetian envoy to Iran, Caterino Zen (elected in 1471), was warmly received by Uzun Hasan because he was a nephew by marriage of the ruler's Byzantine Christian wife, Despina. On behalf of the Venetian Republic, he encouraged Uzun Hasan to march into battle against the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1444–1446 and 1451–1481), but after early signs of victory, the Persian forces were soundly defeated by the Ottomans. Josafat Barbaro, who succeeded Caterino Zen, was supposed to deliver a consignment of arms, but – en route – these were diverted to other purposes in Cyprus. By the time he arrived at the court of Uzun Hasan, the ruler was far more worried about the revolt of his son in Shiraz than about the Ottoman threat. The third ambassador, Ambrogio Contarini, actually met Barbaro in Iran in 1474–1475. At this point, the Aq Quyunlu court was based in Tabriz, but the Shah and his entourage travelled around constantly, and he often lived in temporary pavilions in luxurious but nomadic style.

In order to make their accounts more easily understood at home, all these travellers compared the buildings they saw to familiar buildings in Venice. For instance, Barbaro compared the size of the dome of the mausoleum of Gonbad-e Soltanieh at Sultaniyya with that of the Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. He was struck by the different technique of mosaic work in the audience loggia of Uzun Hasan in Tabriz: "made not [with] minute [pieces] as we do, but [with] large [pieces] and very beautiful, in various colours." As a former merchant, Barbaro was particularly impressed by the city of Kashan, which made silken cloth in such quantities that a merchant with 10,000 ducats could find enough silk and cotton to spend all his money.

Shiraz, the city in revolt, also impressed him, with its huge numbers of merchants from as far away as Samarqand, and quantities of jewels and spices in the bazaars. The population of 200,000 (slightly more than Venice) lived in houses adorned with mosaics and other ornaments, and the city was well fortified. He also visited Isfahan, which had "many great and notable antiquities", among them the caravanserai with a central pool of drinking water surrounded by lodgings and warehousing.

In 1542, a later Venetian envoy to Iran, the Cypriot Michele Membré, delivered a detailed report to the Senate on his return from his journey to the court of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524–1576). The peripatetic character of royal ritual impressed him, and he left a vivid account of the moving of the court tents and pavilions, not to mention the people and possessions. At the capital, Tabriz, he admired the *maydan* (main square), mosques, baths and gardens, and described the palace as a walled enclosure with a munitions tower, stable and bathhouse. The royal residence consisted of "four chambers, one behind the other, with their carpets and antechambers… [the Shah's room] is very small and beautiful, all worked with azure and designs of foliage, as are all the chambers with their vaults, and in the windows… panes of glass with figures in them." However, his descriptions were not sufficiently detailed to convey a clear idea of the buildings to his audience in Venice.

By this time, Venetian architecture was beginning to draw on the lessons of ancient Rome, whereas influence from the East became relegated to some aspects of decoration and furnishing interiors. Fewer members of the ruling patriciate were by now actively involved in oriental trade, whereas the acquisition of a more Roman identity reflected the Republic's pride in its fifth-century foundation by refugees from the last remnants of the Roman Empire.

Venice in the Renaissance

In the sixteenth century, Venice emerged as a leading centre of printing and publishing. This crucial development allowed the city to become a major source of knowledge, both old and new, beyond the confines of the Church and the wealthy elite. Religious works and classical texts – far cheaper than manuscripts – rolled off the presses, gaining added authority by their textual standardization. Printed editions of classical works, such as Ptolemy, Pausanias and Strabo, stimulated the development of cartography and swelled the appetite for geographical information. Marco Polo's travels were first printed in Venice in 1501 by the printer Johannes Battista Sessa.

With the onset of printing, travel narratives entered the Venetian popular imagination thanks, above all, to the remarkable initiative of Gian Battista Ramusio who published all the travel accounts he could lay his hands on, resulting in three volumes arranged geographically, and dated 1550, 1559 and 1556, respectively. For decades, Ramusio collected texts using his network of humanist friends and his connections as secretary in the Doge's Palace. According to the dedication, the intended audience included both scholars and princes.

The second volume, published in 1559, was entirely devoted to travels in Central Asia, from Marco Polo onwards. Ramusio's book was illustrated with woodcut maps. Persia is depicted in two versions: first, the traditional Ptolemaic map; and second, the updated version, on the basis of more recent travel lore. Ramusio himself seems to have been the moving spirit behind a nearly contemporary project to decorate the large Sala dello Scudo in the Doge's Palace with up-to-date maps of the world.

At the very end of the sixteenth century, in the reign of Shah Abbas I (1588–1629), another attempt was made to reinstate close trading relations with Safavid Iran. This time, the focus was not military but commercial, with a particular concern to revive the silk trade. To start the negotiations, the Shah sent an envoy with a letter to the Venetians, written on his behalf by an Englishman, Anthony Sherley, who had been at the Persian court for several months. The Safavid ruler was reported to have been a great supporter of Christianity. He was described in 1602 by a young Venetian merchant, Angelo Gradenigo, as: "about 30 years old, small in stature, but strong – a man of curiosity and impatience". He reportedly wore a crucifix on his sleeve and wanted to build Christian churches in all his lands. He hoped to encourage Christian merchants to return to the Black Sea ports to trade tax free. The main focus was to revive the trade in silk, and the diplomatic exchanges involved elaborate gift-giving ceremonies in which precious textiles were exchanged. We know that gifts of valuable textiles received by the Doge from visiting Eastern delegations were usually handed over to St. Mark's to be transformed into altar cloths. In this case, however, travellers and envoys gave assurances that the Safavid ruler was a great supporter of Christianity, who deliberately ate food and drank wine during Ramadan to annoy the Turks. This meant that the public legitimization of these gifts from the Islamic world was less pressing. The gift-giving ceremony was, however, publicly commemorated in the Doge's Palace in a huge painting by Gabriele and Carletto Caliari in 1603.

Conclusion

Even today, Venetian residents still cherish the idea of the existence of a Persian *fondaco*, although there was no official state-run facility. In the sixteenth century, the building mentioned at the start of this chapter belonged to the Ruzzini family, who let out storerooms on a monthly or daily basis, operating a private *fondaco* where, in theory, Muslim merchants could have stored goods. Later, in 1621, the Fondaco dei Turchi was established for Turkish visitors to Venice, and it seems that Persians and other Muslims also used this facility.

For Venetians, the Silk Roads straddled an intermediate zone between the exotic, distant lands of China and the more familiar Mediterranean fringes. Although the impact on Venetian art and architecture was less than that of the Eastern Mediterranean, Central Asia played a prominent role in Venice's shared geographical imagination through centuries of travel accounts and diplomatic exchanges. Tinged with wonder, it was also the source of both personal memories and precious material goods that infused the culture of the Venetian Republic over centuries.

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Section IV

THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND BEYOND

Then the emir Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman ordered the perfection of the mosque, the embellishment of its ornament, and the addition of the maqsura. He also made three (new) doors for it. When what he had ordered was finished, he entered the mosque and prayed there. The amir al-Mundhir b. Muhammad added the bayt al-mal (treasury) of the mosque. He also ordered the renovation of the water canal and roofs.

Ibn ‘Idhari

Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord et de l'Espagne musulmane, intitulée Kitab al-bayan al-mughrib, et fragments de la chronique de ‘Arib, 1295

With my jewels and with my crown I surpass
the most beautiful,
And before me the stars of the zodiac all bow down ...
It is as though I had received the gift of that bounty
which Flows from the hand of my lord Abu al-Hajjaj.

A poem by Ibn al-Khatib

d. 1375, inscribed in the Court of Myrtles, Alhambra

Chapter 12

Al-Andalus and Maghreb

Islamic Architecture in the Western Mediterranean

By Jordi Tresserras Juan

This chapter focuses on the so-called Al-Andalus and Maghreb architecture that was created as a result of Islamic influences that came from the East, with Western Mediterranean local traditions and innovations from Al-Andalus and Maghreb. Its origin can be traced to 786 CE when the construction of the Mosque of Córdoba first began. The city exerted an important political and cultural influence on the Iberian Peninsula and the north of the Maghreb, which began with the emirate and caliphate of Córdoba until its abolition in 1031 and the emergence of the first Taifa kingdoms. Outstanding architecture of this period include the Córdoba Mosque, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the 'Historic Centre of Córdoba', and the Palatine City of Madinat al-Zahra, inscribed on the World Heritage List as 'Caliphate City of Medina Azahara'. Another site, the Caliphate ribat of las Dunas de Guardamar, is currently on the World Heritage Tentative List, together with other Mediterranean* ribats *(fortified frontier stations). By the end of the tenth century, the Palmeral of Elche had laid out its irrigation system, which survives to this day and is inscribed on the World Heritage List as a unique example of Arab agricultural practices on the European continent. It was during the Berber dynasties of the Almoravids and Almohads that new architectural models were developed.

A background of Islamic architecture for Al-Andalus and Maghreb from the eighth to the fifteenth century

Almoravid asceticism in the face of Andalusian Caliphate liberality is especially reflected in its mosques. The main feature of difference is the use of pillars compared to the use of columns in the Córdoba mosque, which followed models such as those of Kairouan or Damascus and Jerusalem. In the Almoravid mosques, the whiteness of the solid pillars with horseshoe arches stands out, as well as their interior patios (*sahn*) flanked by the extension of the side naves of the prayer room and having an access portico. These mosques incorporate other distinctive elements, such as the *muqarba* (Spanish: *mocárabe*), a form of ornate vault, also known as a honeycomb vault. There are significant examples in Algiers, Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad, Tremcen and Ndroma in Algeria, and Fez or Meknes in Morocco, which continued into the Almohad period with the mosques of Taza and Marrakech in Morocco.

The Almohads also contributed archetypes, especially in the construction of minarets with their simple prism shape, square base and great slenderness. It is worth highlighting the Kutubia minaret in Marrakech, which constitutes an archetype that, together with the Giralda in Seville and the Tour Hassan in Rabat, would be replicated throughout the Ibero-Maghrebi territory. In these three cities, the minaret has become one of the most emblematic icons. It is a style that would be adopted by Mudejar art, whose most significant works are inscribed on the World Heritage List as serial assets, and would be transferred to the American continent and revived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the Neo-Mudéjar style. The use of the *sebka* (from the Arabic *shabaka*, meaning 'network') stands out as a decorative element that has its origin in the interlocking arches that configure a rhomboidal geometric grid as panels to cover walls.

The collapse of the Almohad Empire led to its fragmentation into four kingdoms: the Nasrid (Granada), the Marinid (Fez), the Zianid (Tlemcen) and the Hafsid (Tunis). The culminating examples of architecture of this period include the Alhambra in Granada and the madrasa of Bou Inania in Fez.

Islamic university architecture, which comes from the East, will influence the Marinid madrasas. Under the mandate of the emir, Abu Said Otmán, three madrasas were built in Fez almost simultaneously: Dar al Makhzen (1320), Sahrij (1321–28) and Attarine (1323–25). These constructions configure a model that will later be replicated in other towns, such as the madrasas of Mariniya in Salé (1333–41), Buianania in Meknes, (1351–58), or Ben Yusef in Marrakech (1565). In addition to fulfilling their educational function, they allocated spaces to accommodate students from rural areas and other cities, constituting important complexes. The influence of Merinid architecture on Nasrid architecture has an exponent in the madrasa of Granada. These models were key to the design of the first European university colleges, such as Bologna, Montpellier, Paris, Oxford or Salamanca.

These buildings lack an exterior façade and, instead, have decorative façades in the interior patios across three levels:

- The lower part, with polychromatic ceramic decoration and *zellij* coating (glazed tiles), has predominantly blue and green tones.
- A white plaster body carved in relief with geometric decorations and Kufic script.
- The upper part with its dark-coloured carpentry, from brown to black tones.

This decoration also appears on the façade of the Golden Patio of the Comares Palace of the Alhambra. The patios usually have marble tile floors, with fountains for ablutions in their centre, which also inspired the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra.

In the case of Granada, the construction of the Yusufiyya Madrasa (1333–1354) stands out. It received its name because it was built under the mandate of Yusuf I. It was located next to the Great Mosque and the Alcaicería, which was the main commercial neighbourhood in Granada. Among other teachings, law, medicine and mathematics were also taught. The remains of the white marble doorway are in the Archaeological Museum of Granada. Inside the current building, greatly modified over the centuries, the Muslim oratory room from the fourteenth century stands out.

Nasrid art stood out for the use of masonry, rammed earth, plasterwork and tiling. The horseshoe arch is replaced by the banked, slightly flared version. The columns are slender, adorned with fine mouldings on the shaft and capitals with two bodies: one cylindrical with cina decoration, and the other is cubic in form with *muqarnas*. The walls are tiled on their plinths with lacework or geometric figures, while the ceilings are covered with *muqarnas* vaults.

Lesser known are the mural paintings that have been present since the Caliphal era in Madinat al-Zahra and the Alcázares of Córdoba, especially in the tiled plinths (*zócalos*). In the Nasrid period (1232–1492), in addition to the plinths, *zócalos* were also located in intimate spaces of the houses, with tiling used for the more public areas. They were used on the tympana (*albanegas*) on the *muqarnas* surfaces or mouldings. Fresco paintings were replaced by the tempera technique, expanding the decorative repertoire and colour palette. Highlights include works found in houses and palatine residences in Granada, such as the Cuarto Real de Santo Domingo, the Casa de los Girones or the Corral del Carbón. In the Alhambra, remains are preserved *in situ* in the Patio del Harén in the lower part of the Peinador de la Reina, in the bathroom of the Sala de la Barca, and in the cistern of the Patio de los Leones. However, without a doubt, the set of preserved pieces from the Dar al-Arusa Palace in the highest part of Cerro del Sol, above the Generalife orchards, particularly stand out. The House of Paintings in the Partal de la Alhambra deserves a special mention as they are the only surviving Nasrid figurative mural paintings made on tempera plaster stucco. Made in the first half of the fourteenth century, they combine hunting and festive scenes.

In relation to the Silk Roads, the Umayyads introduced fashion changes in the Eastern Mediterranean seen, for example, in the use of *tiraz* (medieval Islamic embroidery).

Its production was first promoted in Córdoba and Almería, and later in the Nasrid period in Granada. White and black mulberry plantations were developed, giving rise to artisan neighbourhoods (whose names still reflect these historical processes), as well as designated marketplaces known as *alcaicerías* (Arabic: *al-qaysariyya*). This urban model was also implemented in the city of Valencia seen in the Gothic work of La Lonja de la Seda de Valencia (inscribed on the World Heritage List), and the Velluters (velvet weavers) neighbourhood.

Islamic architecture on the UNESCO World Heritage List in Spain

On 4 May 1982, the Government of Spain ratified the 1972 Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural World Heritage, which entered into force in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 on 4 August 1982. A first list of properties was prepared, of which five were selected for registration in a first phase. These were the Alhambra of Granada and the Generalife, the Cathedral of Burgos, the Mosque of Córdoba, the Monastery and site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, and the works of Antoni Gaudí (the Palau Güell, the Park Güell and the Casa Milà-La Pedrera). Two of the nominations represented Islamic architecture (Tresserras, 2022).

Even before Spain ratified the 1972 Convention, a colloquium on the conservation of the monuments belonging to different cultures was organized in Córdoba from 29 April to 2 May 1973. The event was promoted by Antonio Alarcón Constant, mayor of Córdoba, with the support of Piero Gazzola, then president of ICOMOS, Gabriel Alomar Esteve, then vice-president of ICOMOS, and the president of the Spanish Committee of ICOMOS. The underlying debate was the proposal to reintegrate an original image of the Córdoba Mosque (Moreno, 2015). The proposal to dismantle the sixteenth-century transept to recreate a previous construction phase of the monument contravened the Venice Charter, which rejects stylistic integration (Art. IX) and contemplates the notion of a monument with its corresponding evolution over the years, that is, they precisely confer a cultural meaning (Art. I). The Córdoba Resolution on the conservation of monuments belonging to different cultures indicates how monuments: "leave their mark not only as works of art, but for their contributions as an expression of the civilizations that have passed through them, in short, witnesses of the history". This resolution implied the need to "take into account cultural diversity as an element that must be protected" and put an end to the "bold intentions to purify the Mosque-Cathedral". A petition was also added that urged for the inscription of this property on the List of World Heritage.

In those years, the transfer of competence in matters of culture to the autonomous communities was being carried out. At the same time, the UNESCO conventions strengthened the need to maintain a Ministry of Culture as a coordinating entity and to ensure compliance with Spain's international commitments. In this sense, Minister Soledad Becerril and her team participated in the World Conference on Cultural Policies held on 26 July to 6 August 1982 in Mexico City with the Member States of UNESCO. It was here that the Spanish model was presented (UNESCO, 1982).

Below is the list of properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and on the Tentative List related to Islamic architecture and urban planning.

The Emirate and the Caliphate of Córdoba (711–1031)

Córdoba Mosque, Andalucia

The founding mosque was initiated by Abd al-Rahman I, a member of the Umayyad Dynasty who managed to escape from Damascus after the massacre of his family during the Abbasid revolution. He took refuge in Córdoba with his followers and established an independent emirate in 756. The construction of the Great Mosque of Córdoba began in 786 and was completed in less than two years, reusing Roman and Visigoth materials, especially columns and capitals. In this first building, the use of the double arch stands out, with horseshoe arches in the lower area and semi-circular arches in the upper area. The *voussoirs* (stones used for the construction of arches) was another of its characteristics with their alternating colour and material (the brick *voussoirs* are red and the limestone ones are yellowish). An element worth highlighting is the south orientation of the *qibla* walls, instead of the typical southeast orientation towards Mecca. It will be recurrent in other mosques in Al-Andalus and Morocco that were based on a traditional *hadith*. Abd al-Rahman III, who established the Caliphate of Córdoba, enlarged the courtyard of the Great Mosque and built a large minaret, which is preserved inside the Christian bell tower that was built later. Al-Hakam II promoted another important expansion: the central dome of the *maqsura* and the walls of the *mihrab* were decorated with Byzantine golden mosaics, a gift from Emperor Nicephorus II of Constantinople. Artistic synergies were thus generated. The last major expansion was that of al-Mansur, which made the Córdoba Mosque the largest mosque after the Great Mosque of Mecca. The Mosque of Córdoba was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1984 as a unique testimony to the Islamic architecture of the Caliphate of Córdoba. In addition to the mentioned elements, there are also unique honeycomb-shaped capitals, which differ from the Corinthian capitals, and are characteristic of Caliphal art, as well as the combination of the ribbed vault. In 1994, UNESCO approved the expansion of the file that extended registration to the entire historic centre of Córdoba: an urban area that added the complexity of Roman urban planning to that of the Islamic city forged between the eighth and tenth centuries. The main characteristic is its patio houses where, in the month of May, the 'Fiesta of the Patios' takes place, which is celebrated as intangible heritage and was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity in 2012.

Caliphate city of Medina Azahara

The Medina Azhara (Madinat al-Zahra) is an archaeological site of a city built in the mid-tenth century CE by the Umayyad Dynasty as the seat of the Caliphate of Córdoba. After prospering for several years, it was left to deteriorate during the civil war, which ended the caliphate.

The city covered 112 hectares. It was built on the orders of the first caliph of al-Andalus, Abd al-Rahman III, in the year 936 or 940, and was part of the political, economic and ideological programme launched after the establishment of the caliphate. As a personal residence and seat of government, the palatial area housed the homes of the most important dignitaries, as well as all the administrative bodies of the State, which were transferred from Córdoba. During the reigns of Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II, the city became the capital of al-Andalus, and ambassadors from Mediterranean countries and Central Europe paraded through its halls. After the death of al-Hakam II in 976, the city was looted, and its remains were used as a quarry for other constructions.

Figure 1 Remains of the mosque at Madinat al-Zahra

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Figure 2 The central nave of the Upper Basilical Hall (Dar al-Jund) at Madinat al-Zahra, view towards the southern entrance

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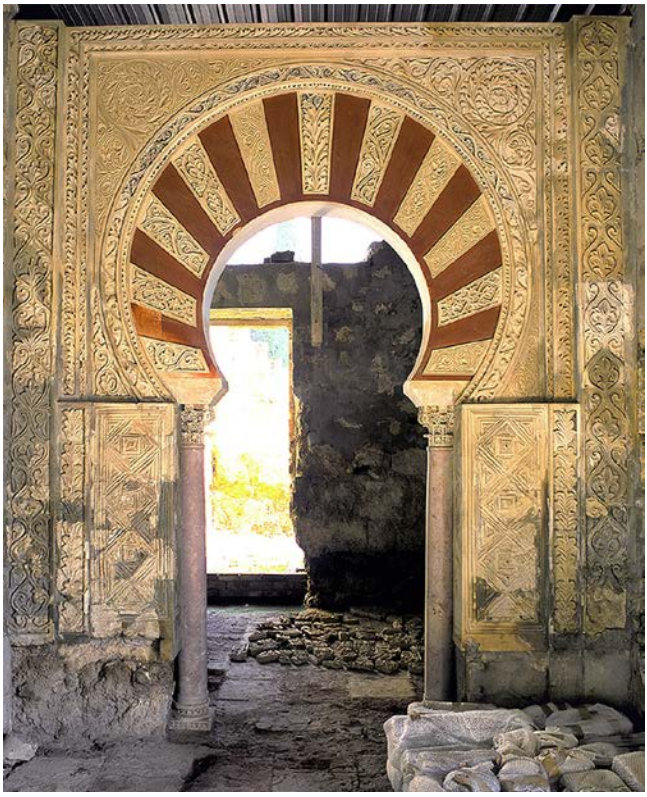
The palace complex consists of both a public and a private part, with elements that were used in the construction of mosques of this period (Figure 1), especially the arches with alternating brick and stone *voussoirs* (Figure 3). Indeed, the use of ashlar masonry (Figure 2) will be an important differentiating factor with the later Nasrid art from the fifteenth century of the kingdom of Granada.

Figure 3 Arch with alternating brick and stone voussoirs innside the Dar al-Mulk at Madinat al-Zahra



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Caliphate ribat of Dunas de Guardamar, Guardamar de Segura (Alicante)

The complex of the Caliphate ribat of Dunas de Guardamar is situated within the autonomous community of Valencia. In the second half of the tenth century, Abd al-Rahman III, who had managed to pacify Al-Andalus, began a policy aimed at controlling and defending the Mediterranean coast, especially in the face of possible ideological and political penetrations of the Fatimids of Egypt. He built a series of *ribats*, such as those in Almería, Sant Carles de la Ràpita, and Guardamar de Segura. The Caliphate ribat of Dunas de Guardama is the only monastic Islamic monument from the Umayyad Andalusian period (tenth to eleventh century), which is almost completely preserved.

The site was abandoned abruptly, probably due to an earthquake in the early eleventh century. It was because of this sudden abandonment that many of the objects found were intact, some were even in their original location. The monument was built on a previous ninth century *musalla*, an open space outside a mosque used mainly for prayer. Following archaeological excavations, a monastic complex of oratory cells, separated by streets or open spaces, was identified, inside which a community of Muslims dedicated their lives to spiritual retreat. It was a pilgrimage centre, as evidenced by 'graffiti', a set of inscriptions in Arabic left by pilgrims in sacred sites and which are preserved on some of the cell walls. It is one of the best preserved *ribats* in the Islamic West, along with the *ribat* of Susa in Tunisia founded by the Aghlabids in 821, although with many later modifications. The NGO CoPaM (Co-développer le patrimoine mondial en Méditerranée) is currently coordinating the nomination of the Mediterranean ribats for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The Palmeral of Elche, Alicante.

Since the end of the tenth century, the palm grove of Elche/Elx is an oasis found in an arid land environment with brackish waters (Figure 4). A system of orchards was developed, with a complex hydraulic system from the waters of the Vinalopó River, which enabled the development of irrigated agriculture. Date palm orchards were associated with other crops, such as alfalfa for animals, pomegranates, and even some vegetables as eggplants. In addition to the topography, the Arabic term *dula* (*dawla*) still exists to refer to the irrigation shift of the lands irrigated by the Acequia Mayor (main canal) on the left bank of the Vinalopó. The Palmeral of Elche was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. Marrakech, founded in 1062 by the Almoravid leader Yusuf Ibn Tashfin, would possess another of the great artificial oases.

Figure 4 The "Imperial Palm" (Palmera Imperial) in the Hort del Cura

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Almoravids and Almohads

Aljafería Palace (Qaṣr al-Ja'fariyah), Zaragoza, Aragon

Alfajería derives from the name of King Abu Jaáfar al-Muqtádir of the Hudi Dynasty. It is a fortified enclosure built as a recreational farm outside the city of Saraqusta (Zaragoza) between orchards and irrigation ditches. It was then called Qasr al-Surur, the Palace of Joy. It is the northernmost Islamic palace in Europe, in addition to being the most luxurious and best preserved palace of the Taifa era. Highlights include the use of mixtilinear arches and horseshoe arches in 'S' (*salmeres*) form, an extension of the openwork ataurique decoration on large surfaces, and the progressive schematization and abstraction of the plant-based plasterwork (Figure 5). With the Christian conquest, it was expanded with the palace of Pedro IV of Aragon, and later the palace of the Catholic monarchs, which was also the seat of the Court of the Inquisition. The palace was inscribed as a property under 'Mudejar Architecture of Aragon' on the World Heritage List in 1986. It is currently the headquarters of the General Court of Aragon.

Figure 5 Detail of the frieze of the Golden Hall of the Aljafería

Kufic frieze on top, reading 'the faithful', polychrome decoration in red, blue, white and black, eleventh century.

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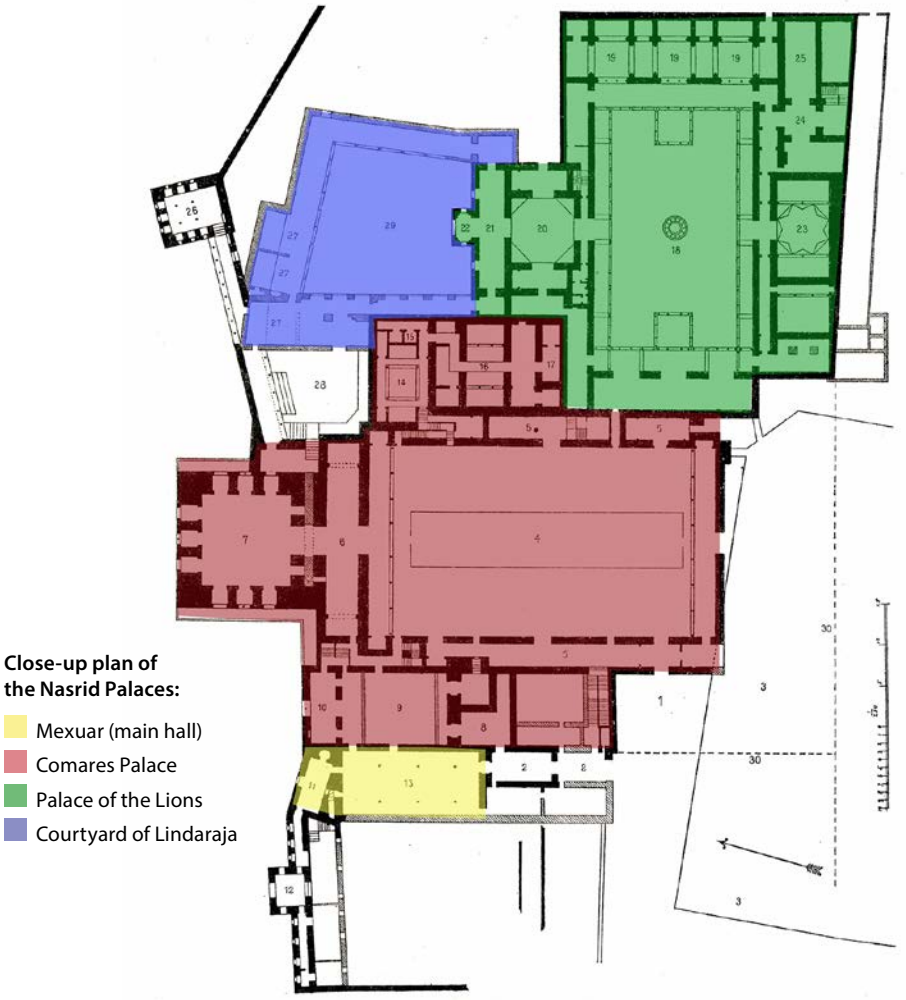
Nasrid kingdom of Granada, thirteenth to fifteenth century

Alhambra of Granada, Generalife gardens and Albaycin quarter

This heritage complex was built on two adjacent hills separated by the Darro River that make up the palatine city of the Alhambra with its Generalife gardens and the residential neighbourhood of Albaycin.

After the civil war that followed the Caliphate of Córdoba (1031), the Taifa kingdom of the Ziris moved from Elvira to Granada, its capital. In the year 1238, Muhammad ibn Nsr, called 'al-Hamar' (the red) because of the colour of his boat, and founder of the Nasrid Dynasty, took the city and rebuilt and expanded the citadel of the Alhambra to transform it into a fortified palace complex. It would become a residence for his family and for senior officials, as well as for elite soldiers and court service personnel.

Figure 6 Alhambra, plan of the Nasrid Palaces



Plan: © Constantin Uhde, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The gardens and pavilions of the Generalife likely date from the reign of Isma'il (314–1325). But the most important parts of the Alhambra belong to the time of Yusuf I (1333–1354) and the second reign of Muhammed V (1362–1391) when the palace complex reached its ultimate splendour (Figure 6). In three centuries of activity, the palace complex can be differentiated as follows:

- The citadel, intended for the elite corps.
- The palaces with their patios, such as the Arrayanes and the Lions (Figure 7), or the Golden Room and their associated infrastructures, such as the Comares hammam. Nasrid art combines Islamic and Mediterranean art forms, synthesizing and distilling seven centuries of construction tradition in a unique example of palatial architecture. Among all decorative and constructive developments, the use of Arabic epigraphy stands out, which has been defined as 'speaking architecture' with content related to the religious, political and poetic world. The dome of the Abencerrajes and Two Sisters rooms (Figure 8) are inherited from the geometric layouts of the Umayyads of Córdoba along with the muqarnas incorporated by the Berber dynasties. The gardens and orchards have a hydraulic system that is based on the sultan's irrigation canal, which channels the water of the Darro River to the upper part of the Generalife and enters the Alhambra through an aqueduct. Other standout buildings include the Los Albercones.

Figure 7 Alhambra, Stucco-carved muqarnas (or mocárabes) in the Palace of the Lions

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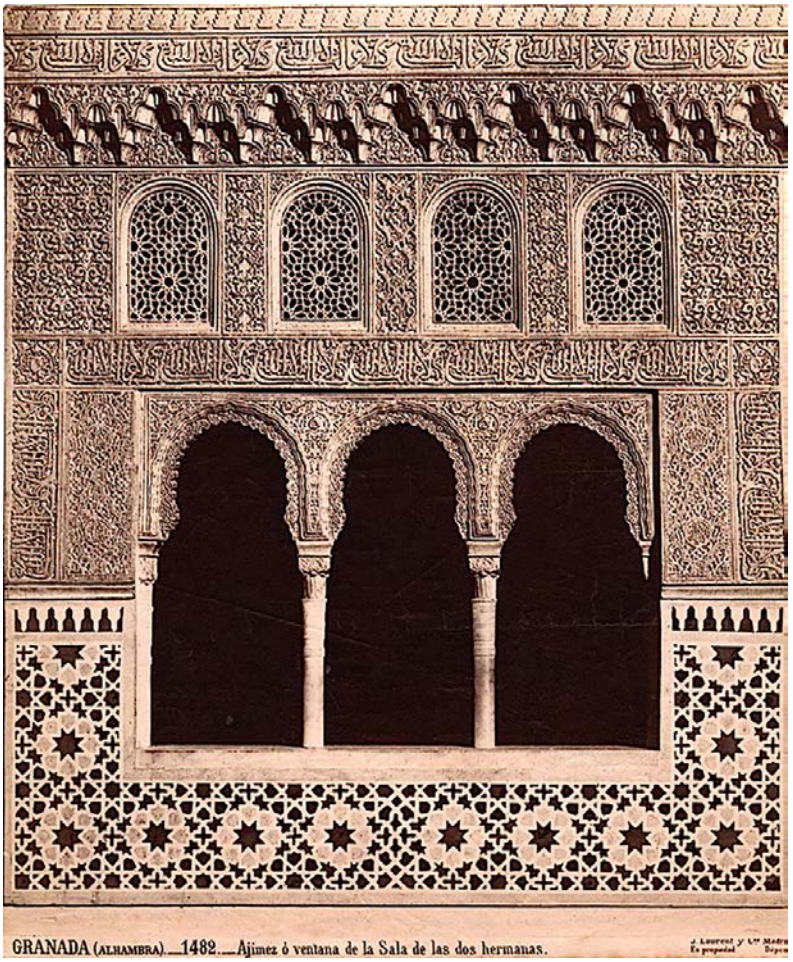
- The urbanism has its origins in the Zirid Dynasty (972–1148) to the magnificence of the Nasrid Dynasty, with important elements such as the palace of Dar al-Horra (House of the Honest). The palace is located in the Alcazaba Cadima. It was so-named for having been the official residence of Aixa la-Horra, wife of Muley Hacén and mother of the last Emir of Granada, Boabdil. In Dar al-Horra, various agreements were signed in 1493 with the Mudejar nobility of Granada, who were persuaded to move with their deposed emir to Morocco. Other standout buildings include the hammam al-Yawza, or Baño del Nogal, known colloquially as the Bañuelo for being smaller than the royal baths of the Alhambra or the Corral del Carbón (al-fundaq al-yadida, i.e. new market). The hammam served as a warehouse and sales point for wheat, as well as accommodation for merchants arriving in Granada.

Figure 8 Alhambra, Mullioned windows of the Hall of the Two Sisters in the Alhambra, by Juan Laurent, c. 1874

Stucco decoration can be seen on the upper walls while geometric tile mosaic is seen below.



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The analysis of Islamic iconoclasm and the significance of symbols and imagery in Islamic art deserve reflection in Al-Andalus. In Almoravid-era Spain (a period of Koranic austerity), ceramics showcased geometric and vegetal decorative motifs, whereas in textiles, the repertoire of Sassanid bestiaries was prevalent. However, following the Almohad invasion, ceramics once again featured animal themes. Nasrid art also showcased representations like the fountain in the Patio de Leones of the Alhambra, where palaces also preserved pictorial decorations with hunting scenes.

Mudejar art in Christian kingdoms

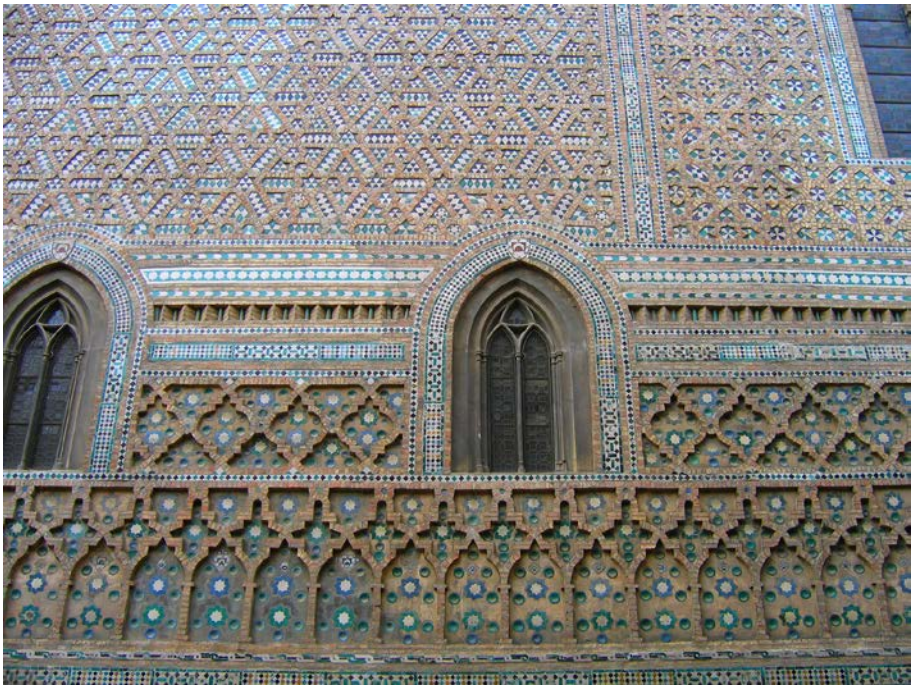
The Muslim settlers, who remained on the peninsula after the Reconquista, were called Mudejars (from the Arabic: Mudayan), meaning those who have been allowed to stay through a pact. Many of them specialized in trades related to construction, playing a key role in the construction of palaces, monasteries and churches for the newly arrived Christians, as well as for the Jewish community. The term 'Mudejar art' was coined by Amador de los Ríos in 1859 when he gave his entrance speech at the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid. Mudejar art maintains a dialogue with other artistic styles, such as Romanesque, Gothic or Renaissance. The use of brick, plaster, tiles and wood (coffered ceilings) are its main characteristics. This term was also used for Moors and Christians who learned the techniques of Islamic art. In the case of Spain, there is no unified artistic style, but rather regional variants, and even more so with the influence of the Americas; a process that would continue until the expulsion of the Moors in 1609. In the nineteenth century, the Neo-Mudejar style, along with other historical styles, were developed.

Mudejar architecture in Aragon was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986 (with extensions in 2001 and 2006) and includes the following Mudejar properties: the Cathedral of Santa Maria de Mediavilla; the churches of San Martín, San Pedro and San Salvador in Teruel; the Seo (Cathedral of Zaragoza) (Figure 9) and the church of San Pedro in Zaragoza; the collegiate church of Santa María de Calatayud; the church of Santa Tecla de Cervera de la Cañada; and the church of Santa María (the Virgin) in Tobed. Alfajería Palace in Zaragoza is also included for its Mudejar elements.

Mudejar constructions are also prominent properties in cities inscribed on the World Heritage List, such as the Alcázar of Segovia in the Old Town (1985); El Tránsito Synagogue and the church of Santa María la Blanca in Toledo (1986); the Royal Chapel of the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, the synagogue and the Puerta del Perdón (1984, extension in 1994). Other properties include Reales Alcázares (1987) in Sevilla, the Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe (1993), and the city of San Cristobal de la Laguna (1999) in the Canary Islands. In the case of Latin America, there are several examples, including the early sixteenth-century monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl (1994) in Mexico, the Jesuit Missions of La Santísima Trinidad de Paraná and Jesús de Tavarangue in Paraguay (1993) and several monuments in the historic centres of Cuzco, Peru (1983), Sucre in Bolivia (1991), and Coro and its port in Venezuela (1993).

Figure 9 Façade of Parroquieta Chapel of La Seo de Zaragoza, Aragon

A gothic building with elaborate mudéjar masonry.



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Conclusion

Between the eighth and fifteenth centuries, the architecture of Al-Andalus and the Maghreb combined Mediterranean, Hispano-Roman, Visigothic and preceding Berber cultural bases that are articulated with the Umayyad Caliphal architecture that subsequently took on its own character. This was evidenced by the contributions of Almohads and Almoravids, and which reached another climax with the Meridien and Nasrid kingdoms. This chapter describes the many sites inscribed on the World Heritage List that are linked to Islamic art and, above all, are connected to trade routes such as the Silk Roads.

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Chapter 13

Seville, the Islamic-Christian Bridge

Connecting North Africa and the Americas

By Carlos García Vázquez

Seville is one of the few human settlements to have remained continuously inhabited for more than 2,000 years. This is due to its exceptional geographical location in the Guadalquivir Valley, on a site from where the river can be navigated all the way to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean, 84 km away. For several centuries, this inland port blessed the city with a maritime character that was key to placing it at the centre of the world. In the twelfth century, convoys of ships connected Seville with Salé in Morocco, just as they did in the sixteenth century with Havana, Veracruz, Portobello and Cartagena de Indias, in the 'New World' (Figure 1).

This chapter presents the urban and architectural evolution of Seville from the twelfth century, when it was named the capital of the Almohad Caliphate, to the sixteenth century, when it was the de facto capital of the Spanish transcontinental empire. Indeed, exceptional cultural exchanges took place during this period, and the city became an Islamic-Christian bridge connecting North Africa and the Americas.

Figure 1 Spanish oceanic trade routes in the 16th century**

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The port of Seville was the main maritime hub of the empire during the sixteenth century.

From Hispalis to Isbiliya: the Islamic city

Although there is evidence of Phoenician presence in the area between the ninth and sixth centuries BCE, Seville was consolidated as a city in the first century BCE. The Romans settled on this location because it was the most inland point they could access with their ships, loading up on the agricultural products collected in the fertile Guadalquivir Valley (especially oil, wheat and wine), as well as metals extracted from the Sierra Morena mines.

Hispalis, the Roman name for Seville, was founded on a promontory next to the river. It was a linear city surrounded by a wall and organized around the *cardo* and the *decumanus* (roads) which crossed in the *forum*. Downhill from outside the wall stood the port. In the mid-sixth century, the Visigoths took control of this modest Roman city, which had been Christianized two centuries earlier. Indeed, the intellectual work of Bishop San Isidoro (ca. 560–636 CE) turned the city into a relatively important cultural centre.

The first 350 years of Christian Seville came to an end in 711 when the troops of Musa ibn Nusair, a military commander in the service of the governor of Egypt, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar. This is how 'al-Andalus' (the name the Muslims gave to the Iberian Peninsula) and the name 'Isbiliya' (which they renamed 'Hispalis') were born. Thus began five centuries of Islamic rule.

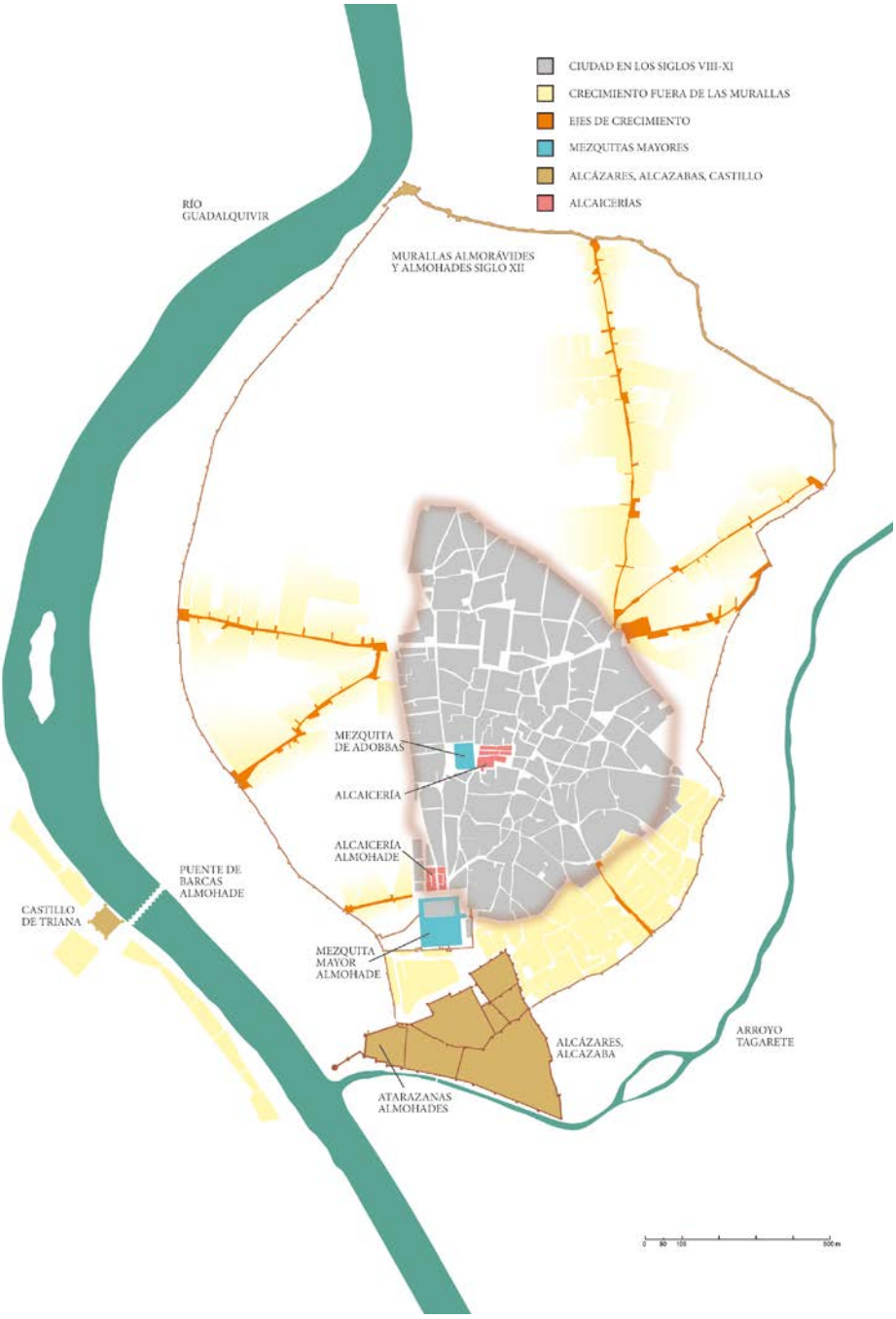
The Muslims who arrived in Isbiliya (mainly Adnanid and Yemeni Arabs, as well as North African Berbers) intermingled peacefully with the local population, the Visigoth Christians, allowing them to freely practise their religion, maintain their customs and speak their own language. The old Roman urban structure also remained, albeit with slight alterations. In 829, the city's main mosque, the Ibn Adabbas, was built. A few years later, following the Norman assault of 844, the walls of the city were reinforced and extended.

In 756, al-Andalus declared itself independent from the recently established Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad. First, it was an emirate, then in 929 it became a caliphate. Its capital was established in Cordoba, the neighbouring and rival city of Isbiliya. Despite this, and thanks to its port, Isbiliya maintained its status as the gateway of the caliphate towards the Mediterranean and the Atlantic oceans. In the tenth century, the *Atlas of Islam* included Isbiliya among the dozen cities that stood out in the Muslim West. Significantly, the atlas placed it on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1023, Islamic Seville ceased to be in the shadow of Cordoba. The Banu Abbad family, who controlled the city, broke away from the caliphate and created an independent kingdom, the largest Taifa kingdom in al-Andalus. Isbiliya, its capital, thus became an important political and cultural centre. The attraction it had for the thousands of Muslims fleeing the advance of Christian troops in the central areas of the Iberian Peninsula led to a demographic boom. It was at this time that Isbiliya clearly became an Islamic city from an urban and architectural point of view. A vibrant souk flourished around the Ibn Adabbas Mosque. The Roman walls were again extended, and an extensive residential fabric was developed within its walls, made up of one- or two-storey houses built with bricks, tiles and plaster, and whitewashed with lime. They were introverted homes with angled entrances organized around inner patios and with few openings to the outside. The blocks they formed were large and were perforated by *adarves*, dead-end narrow alleys that gave access to the houses. The streets of Isbiliya were extremely narrow and there were no public squares. Contrary to Roman law, Maliki legislation (one of the four schools of religious law within Sunni Islam) established the primacy of the private realm over the public one, resulting in a dense and irregular urban fabric where public spaces were irrelevant.

The splendour of the Taifa kingdom was brief. By the end of the eleventh century, the Christian Kingdom of Castile, which had conquered Toledo in 1085, was knocking at its door. This threat led the Taifa king, al-Mutamid, to request the help of the Almoravids, a tribe of soldier-monks from the Sahara who dominated the Maghreb. In 1091, the Almoravids entered Isbiliya, liquidating the Taifa kingdom. Their military roots, together with the pressing threat from Castile, explains why the Almoravids prioritized the construction of a new and gigantic wall (Figure 2), which was 7 km long and enclosed an area of 275 hectares (ha). The city became one of the largest walled enclosures in Europe (compared to Paris's 225 ha, Valencia's 140 ha, Bologna's 120 ha and Lisbon's 100 ha). The built urban fabric only occupied the southern half of the enclosure. The rest of the area remained unbuilt for centuries and remained as wasteland or used as vegetable gardens. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the enclosed area within the Almoravid walls was utilized.

Figure 2 Seville's map during the Islamic period**



Rectified plan by Mabel Regidor after A. Collantes and A. Jiménez' hypothesis.
© Mabel Regidor.

In 1147, a new Muslim invasion took place, this time led by the Almohads, a nomadic Berber tribe from the Moroccan Atlas. For more than a century, al-Andalus was part of the Almohad Caliphate, which expanded on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, from Marrakech to Valencia and from Lisbon to Tripoli. The most splendid period of Isbiliya started from this time. From a political point of view, the city shared its capital status of the Almohad Caliphate with Marrakech, serving as a place of residence for its caliphs; from an economic point of view, the city became one of the main maritime hubs linking Europe and North Africa.

The Almohads undertook numerous and expensive public works. The transformation of the port was paramount. In 1171, they built a dock and equipped it with a crane for loading and unloading ships. That same year they installed a bridge connecting the northern end of the port with the uninhabited western bank of the river. It was made of boats locked with an iron chain that was anchored to pylons sunk in the water. Given its strategic value, a defence castle was erected next to the boat bridge. In 1221, at the southern end of the port, another defensive tower was built, the Torre del Oro. From it, access to the port could be blocked to potential enemies coming from the Atlantic. Between the port and the Almoravid wall there was a wide sandy area, the Arenal, where naval supplies and goods accumulated, and it was here that the customs office was built. This configuration essentially remained unchanged until the nineteenth century. The boat bridge divided the port into two areas: the fluvial port in the northern area, where small flat boats travelling upstream to Cordoba could dock; and the international port between the bridge and the Torre del Oro, where large deep-draft vessels coming from the Atlantic could dock (Figure 2).

Isbiliya's transformation was not only infrastructural. The Almohads also built two large, monumental complexes that were inspired by similar operations carried out in the sister city of Marrakech: the Alcazar and the new main mosque. The Alcazar was built at the southern end of the Almoravid walled enclosure where the Taifa Banu Abbad family had already erected some palatial structures. In 1150, the Almohads started building the first of four military fortresses on that site. Eleven palaces were added to those buildings, as well as several gardens-orchards that evoked the paradise promised by the Qur'an.

The Alcazar was surrounded by a wall connected to the Torre del Oro by a passageway. Eleven hectares in area, it was a true city within the city. Only remnants of the Almohad palaces remain today, as the Christians built their own palaces on these sites. The most important one is the Patio del Yeso or 'Plaster Courtyard', which was built in 1189 around a pool. Its southern front is an early example of the so-called 'Almohad syntagma': three bands following the rhythm aaa A aaa. The central band has a monumental arch decorated with lambrequins. The bands on either side have triple-lobed arcades surrounded by sebka, a typical Almohad lattice consisting of geometric motifs made in plaster or brick (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Patio del Yeso, Alcazar of Seville

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At a short distance to the north of the Alcazar, separated by a wide esplanade, the Almohads built a new main mosque (1172–1186). The old mosque, Ibn Adabbas, did not reach the standards of the splendid capital of the caliphate. The dimension of the new main mosque was similar to the Great Umayyad Mosque of Cordoba, which it intended to emulate. The *sahn* (or ablutions courtyard) measured 46 m by 82 m. The prayer room, measuring 68 m by 108 m, had 17 naves separated by pointed horseshoe arches supported on brick pillars. The most unique and spectacular element of the complex was the minaret (Figure 4), which was built between 1184 and 1198. In this case, the reference was the minaret of the main mosque of Marrakech, the mythical Kutubiyya. It stood at a height of 64 m and consisted of two parts. The lower part was divided into three vertical bands: the central band had lobed arched windows, and the side bands were made of *sebkas* carved into brick. This delicate decoration gave the minaret an exceptional lightness. Upon this section of the minaret, another narrower, lower volume was erected, topped with four spheres of gilt bronze decreasing in size. Al-Sala, the chronicler of the Almohad caliphs, reported that the glow of these spheres, under the relentless Andalusian sun, produced a blinding, incandescent light visible to travellers approaching Isbiliya on foot or by boat. The beauty of this sort of 'day lighthouse' was admired by Muslims, and later by Christians.

Seville did not undergo such an urban and architectural transformation again until 1929 when the Latin American International Exhibition took place in the city. The monuments built by the Almohads marked its urban landscape forever. Compared to the rough and basic Romanesque architecture built in twelfth-century Western Europe, Almohad architecture was delicate, refined and profusely ornamented. The gracefulness of the Seville we know today owes a lot to this period.

Figure 4 Evolution of Seville's main mosque minaret or Giralda Tower

Almohad original minaret on the left. Christian alterations in the middle and on the right.

Public domain, via Internet Archive.

The early Christian period: "new name, new God, new rulers"

On 23 November 1248, the Christian troops from Castile entered Isbiliya. The city changed "its name, its God, its rulers" and also its population. King Fernando III of Castile gave Muslim residents one month to leave 'Sevilla', the name the Castilians gave to the city. Only a few small groups of Muslims could remain, the Mudejars. The rest had to leave the city or convert to Christianity, becoming Moriscos (Christian Moors). In fact, most of the Muslim inhabitants left the city. They were replaced by Christians coming from Castilla, León, Catalonia and other regions, who were lured by the promise of land donations. The new rulers also encouraged the arrival of Jews, whose religious practices were protected.

Consequently, by 1250 the trace of five centuries of Islamic dominion in Seville was limited to its street layout and buildings (the city did not suffer any major damage during the Christian conquest). However, the admiration the newcomers had with Almohad resulted in a fascinating phenomenon of cultural exchange. Alfonso X, King of Castile between 1252 and 1284, exclaimed: "Seville is and was the noblest city in the world [...] greater than any other in Spain".

Alfonso X lived long periods of time in Seville. His successors on the throne of Castile continued this tradition until the end of the fourteenth century, which made the city the de facto capital of the Kingdom of Castile. Economic dynamism merged with its political relevance. After the Christian conquest, Seville became the capital of the *frontera*, the strip of the Guadalquivir Valley that bordered the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, the last territory of the Iberian Peninsula still in Muslim hands.

Once again, the port was key to Seville's wealth. Already in the thirteenth century, the city was the main base of the infant Castilian navy. In the fourteenth century, trade between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic through the Strait of Gibraltar was reactivated, with Seville's port functioning as a connecting point. Merchants from all over Europe settled in the city. Among them, the Genoese stood out, and they engaged in the export of the agricultural products of the Guadalquivir Valley. They were the germ of a commercial and financial elite that, over time, would share power with the Castilian aristocracy, which possessed large real estate assets. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Seville had 20,000 inhabitants and was the biggest city in the Kingdom of Castile. A century later, its population had doubled.

The vast Almohad urban fabric sufficed to host the new Christian residents. They occupied the Muslims' houses; homes that corresponded to a different world view but allured them toward a new way of life. The transformation process was slow. The patio was kept as the centre of the house, although it gradually opened out to the street. The neighbourhood mosques were also kept. After being consecrated to the Christian faith, many of them were used as churches and became the religious-administrative centres of the 26 neighbourhoods or *collaciones* into which the city was divided. Two of those districts were discriminated. The first one was the *juderia*, a walled-in and isolated enclosure that accommodated the 2,000 members of the Jewish community, the second largest in Castile after Toledo. This neighbourhood existed until 1391 when it was attacked and looted. The second discriminated neighbourhood was the *moreria* where the scattered population of 6,000 Mudejars throughout the city were concentrated in 1478.

The functional structure of Muslim Isbiliya was also maintained in Christian Seville. The new settlers confirmed the location of the Almohad political-religious centre, with the Alcazar retaining its function as a royal residence, and the adjacent main mosque (which was consecrated to Christian worship) continuing its use as a cathedral until its demolition in 1433. The souk next to the old Ibn Adabbas Mosque continued as a market. Butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, artisans, as well as the important foreign merchant colony that lived in the city, distributed their wares throughout its streets.

As for the port itself, it underwent few changes. The Royal Shipyards, one of the first public buildings built by the Castilian crown in 1252, was located at the port with the purpose of constructing military galleons. The building had 17 naves, each with a length of 100 m and a height of 12 m. They covered an area of 15,000 m^2, which made Seville's shipyard, along with Venice, one of the two largest in the world.

On the outskirts of town, the urbanization process advanced slowly, both within and outside the Almoravid walls. Convents stand out among the Christian structures that began to colonize these areas. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, around 20 were built. The 'spiritual wall' of Christian Seville began to take shape, a process that intensified towards the end of the fifteenth century. The city has the dubious honour of having hosted the first Inquisition Court of Spain. It was established in 1481 to persecute the "false converts", that is, the Muslims and Jews who continued to secretly practise their faith. Paradoxically, this religious intolerance took place in typically Muslim spaces, both urban and architectural. The Seville of the Inquisition had infinitely more similarities with Marrakech than with any other European Christian capital.

Mudejar architecture: Islamic designs for Christian purposes

Indeed, Seville's Christian population lived in a strongly Islamized spatial environment in the second half of the thirteenth century. As we have seen, the urban morphology and the functional structure of Isbiliya were consolidated; Muslim homes continued to be inhabited, and the ancient mosques continued to be used as worship places. Mudejar architecture extended with time this fascinating phenomenon of cultural syncretism.

Mudejar architecture is a Spanish-Portuguese singularity that differentiates the Iberian Peninsula's historic architecture from that of the rest of Europe. Its origin is thought to have been established around 1085 when the Castilians took Toledo. Unlike what happened in Seville, they erected a statute in Toledo that allowed Muslims to stay, ensuring respect for their religion and customs. This religious minority, the Mudejar, was a skilled workforce, abundant and cheap. Castilians entrusted them with the construction of their churches. Over time, Mudejars trained Christian carpenters and bricklayers, who transferred the decorative, technical, typological and productive traditions of Muslim buildings to Christian churches.

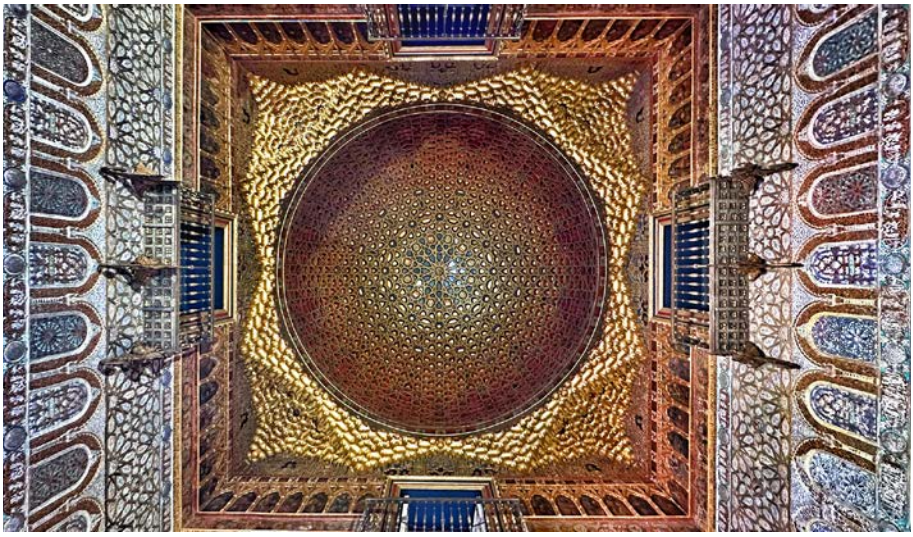
This origin explains the popular nature of Mudejar architecture. It was humble, unacademic and pragmatic, a far cry from the dogmatism, elitism and symbolism of the architecture of power. Mudejar architecture was characterized by the use of materials that came from the rich Muslim artisan traditions and were cheap and easy to handle, such as brick, ceramics, plaster, tiles, and especially wood. The Mudejar builders prioritized the economy of means over any kind of intellectual or symbolic reflection, which resulted in a fresh eclecticism.

They had no problem in adding Islamic architectural elements (horseshoe arch windows, *alfiz*-framed doors, intertwined arch domes, *sekbas*, *muqarnas*, lacework, etc.) to the Christian styles of the time, that is, Romanesque and Gothic.

The most characteristic trade of Mudejar architecture was carpentry. In medieval Castile, carpentry guilds were governed by local ordinances. They defined the different professional categories (structural framework carpenters, door and window carpenters, furniture carpenters, etc.) and regulated access to each of them. Curiously, the ordinances of Seville prohibited the teaching of the profession to the Moriscos, therefore, it was Castilian carpenters who transferred Islamic designs into Mudejar carpentry. They were the creators of one of the most genuine elements of Seville's Mudejar buildings: wooden ceilings.

Traditionally, Islamic architecture resolved ceilings by assembling boards that were later carved, and on which small slats were nailed by drawing geometric motifs (the eight-point star was a recurring one). The Castilian carpenters went much further, crafting monumental wooden domes and vaults (Figure 5). Their most common features were the coffered ceiling and the *armadura*. The coffered ceiling was a horizontal roof made of several main beams that supported a layer of secondary and smaller beams, the *jaldetas*. The spaces between the main beams and the *jaldetas* were filled with decorated panels. The *armadura* was a gable roof, normally resolved by means of the *par y nudillo* technique, that is, the use of sloping beams (*pares*) supported on the walls and on the ridge of the roof, joined together by transverse beams (*nudillos*) arranged to avoid deformations (Figure 9).

Figure 5 Mudejar dome, Salón de Embajadores, Alcazar of Seville



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Despite its popular origin during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Mudejar architecture was sponsored by the monarchy and the nobility, which adopted it to build palaces and monasteries. An example of this was the parish churches construction programme that the crown of Castile sponsored in Seville after the 1356 earthquake, which destroyed many of the Almohad mosques that had been used as places of Christian worship. The 17 Mudejar temples built under this programme were very similar, with basilica floor plans consisting of three naves separated by pointed arches, supported by brick pillars and covered by coffered or *armadura* ceilings (Figure 6). At one end of the central nave, which was higher than the side ones, there was a polygonal apse. It was externally reinforced by buttresses, between which slender twin-pointed windows of clear Gothic inspiration were arranged. At the other end of the nave rose the main façade: a stone *alfiz* framing an archivolt gate, above which a Gothic rose window was arranged. Nonetheless, the most outstanding piece of Sevillian Mudejar churches was the tower, a clear demonstration of cultural syncretism. It was a sort of Almohad minaret, with *sebka* panels and *alfiz*-framed horseshoe arches, eccentrically topped by a Christian belfry.

Figure 6 Central nave of Santa Catalina Mudejar church, Seville

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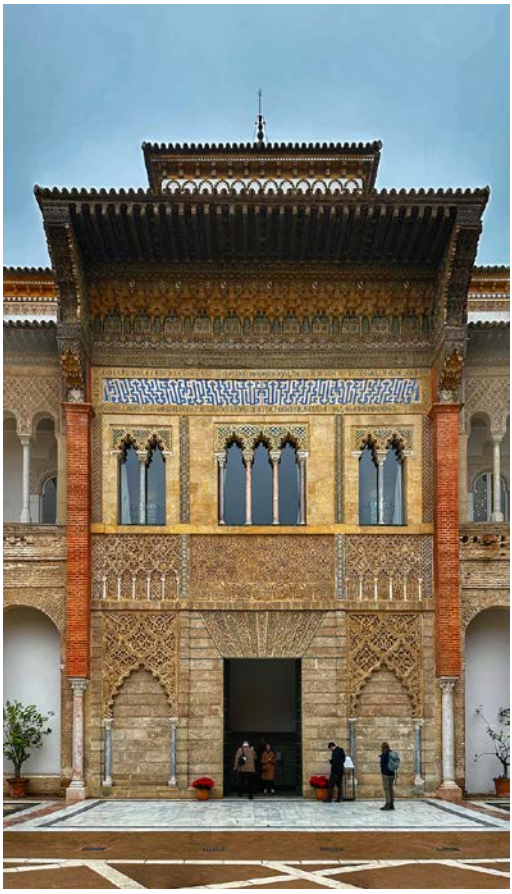
The Mudejar Palace of the Alcazar of Seville is another example of the crown's sponsorship of Mudejar architecture. It was built by King Pedro I between 1356 and 1366, a period of peace in the ongoing war between Castile and the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada. During this time, King Pedro I and Sultan Muhammad V established a close friendship. Muhammad V sent master artisans and masons to Seville who had been engaged in the construction of the Alhambra. Their contribution enriched the ornamental repertoire of Sevillian Mudejar with glazed tile plinths and plaster friezes decorated with Kufic calligraphy.

The Mudejar Palace was organized around two courtyards: the Patio de las Doncellas (the political and protocol centre) and the Patio de las Muñecas (the domestic centre). Between both patios stood the Salón de Embajadores, a square room or *qubba* covered by a spectacular hemispherical wooden dome on *muqarna* pendentives (Figure 5). The tripartite structure of the façade was clearly Almohad. The central band held the main gate and was flanked by two side bands of blind-lobed arches opened on *sebka* panels. On the upper floor, a gallery of lobed arches was topped by a frieze with an inscription in Kufic characters. It surprisingly proclaimed: "The only victor is Allah" (Figure 7).

The cultural syncretism of the Mudejar Palace circled back to its origins. A few years later, it served as a reference for the Dos Hermanas room at the Patio de los Leones, built by Muhammad V in the Alhambra.

Figure 7 Mudejar Palace, Alcazar of Seville



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Some scholars defend that the crown's sponsorship of Mudejar architecture hid a political and ideological purpose. The Christian use of designs coming from the Islamic tradition that were common to the collective memory of Christians, Muslims and Jews intended to acculturate and re-educate people. In this way, the strongly Islamized space of the new Castilian cities was disassociated from its original religious and cultural meaning and reassociated to Christianity and Western culture.

The rapid expansion of Mudejar architecture throughout the different social strata of the Iberian Peninsula in fact showed how the Christian population had assimilated quite naturally the widespread ingrained heritage they had received from the Muslims. This fact was probably due to the fascination that the refined Islamic art instilled among the Castilian conquerors who came from places with much stricter artistic expressions.

This social consensus, however, did not mean that the Castilian political and religious power renounced Gothic architecture, the symbol of European Christian monarchies. In 1433, the main Almohad mosque was demolished and a gigantic Gothic building, covering more than 7,000 m^2 and reaching a height of 37 m, a true hollow mountain, was built on top of it. Only the ablution courtyard and the minaret were spared destruction. The four golden spheres topping the minaret were replaced by a superb Renaissance belfry designed by Hernán Ruiz II. The resulting tower, called Giralda, was another clear demonstration of cultural syncretism: two-thirds of it were Muslim, one-third was Christian (Figure 4).

The Gothic cathedral was finished in 1506. Seville approached the sixteenth century with this amazing dialectic between Muslim and Christian architectures, which coexisted quite naturally in the city.

Seville and the Americas: the 'New Rome'

In 1492, two major historical events took place in Spain: the Castilian takeover of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada (the last territory of the Iberian Peninsula still in Muslim hands) and the arrival of Christopher Columbus in America. Seville entered its 'golden century' when it became the de facto capital of the Spanish transcontinental empire. The bridge between North Africa and Europe was thus extended to the 'New World'.

In 1503, the Catholic monarchs, Isabella of Castile and Fernando of Aragon, established the 'Casa de la Contratación' in Seville, a regulatory agency for overseas trade whose control was granted to the port of Seville with regard to the monopoly regime of trans-Atlantic trade. The centralization of trade with the Americas in a single port showed the will of the monarchy to ensure its strict monitoring. Seville was chosen to fulfil this task because it had an inland port, which was less vulnerable to enemy attacks, and it made smuggling difficult (the neighbouring port of Cadiz was occasionally raided by the English navy).

For 180 years Seville was *puerta y puerto de Indias* ('gate and port of the Indies'), the place from which the complex system of conquest and exploitation of America was commanded. At first, traffic between the two Atlantic shores took place sporadically by means of expeditions, which were not scheduled in time and were carried out by ships that made the crossing alone, without any kind of protection. In the second half of the sixteenth century, when Spain was aware of the immense economic potential of the New World, and when pirate attacks multiplied, traffic was regulated. From then on, the ships departed from Seville in convoys composed of merchant and military fleets. They did so twice a year in the most appropriate months for navigation. The first convoy left Seville at the beginning of April for Veracruz and Puerto de Caballos in Honduras, and the second convoy left in August towards Cartagena de Indias, Portobello and – after crossing the isthmus of Panama – Guayaquil and Callao in Peru. Both convoys spent the winter in America, met in Havana in March, and returned to Seville. Thus completing the 'Carrera de Indias' (Figure 1).

Fleets arrived at Seville's port loaded with gold, silver and exotic products, such as corn, potatoes, tomatoes and tobacco. On the Seville side of the Atlantic, ships were loaded with wine, wheat, oil, clothing, weapons, carriages, animals and hundreds of people. Soldiers and monks were sent to fulfil the military and religious colonization of the continent, whereas bricklayers, stonemasons, carpenters and artisans would fulfil its physical construction. They were joined by hordes of beggars, criminals and adventurers of all kinds. Indeed, a large part of the Sevillian population emigrated to America in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Many others left to repopulate the old Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, from where the Muslims had been expelled. In 1526, the Venetian ambassador Andrea Navajero commented that Seville was a city, "almost in the hands of women".

Despite this constant exchange of people and goods, the port of Seville underwent few transformations and the Almohad structures remained. The only link with the western bank of the Guadalquivir River continued to be the weak and unstable boat bridge built in the twelfth century. Although floods caused serious damage to the city on a dozen of occasions during the sixteenth century, a stone pier or a defence system to stop the flooding was never erected. Disdain and neglect were entirely noticeable in the chaotic Arenal. According to the chronicles, a crowd of carpenters, caulkers, coopers, muleteers, plumbers and divers worked there. They were joined by sailors, soldiers, merchants and monks embarking towards the New World. They all wandered among piles of merchandise, dismantled artillery pieces, fish-drying racks, carpenters' sheds and ship equipment shops. The Monte del Malbaratillo, a hill of garbage and debris, completed the scene.

Facing the port, on the western riverbank, emerged the town of Triana. It had developed around the Almohad boat bridge and castle, which was transformed by Castilians into the Inquisition Court headquarters. In streets parallel to the river, pottery workshops, as well as soap and gunpowder factories, were established to produce goods that were exported to the Americas. A great number of Triana's 15,000 inhabitants were port workers or passing sailors who stayed in inns and relaxed in the countless taverns and brothels that populated the neighbourhood (Figure 8).

By the mid-sixteenth century, Seville was one of the main financial and commercial centres in Europe. Colonies of Florentines, Venetians, Portuguese, English, Germans, Catalans, French and Basques joined the powerful Genoese colony which had originally arrived in the thirteenth century. The 50,000 inhabitants of 1530 became 125,000 by the end of the century, a figure that remained stable until the mid-seventeenth century. This demographic boom can only be explained by the huge influx of immigrants who settled in the city, given that a large part of Seville's native population had abandoned the city between 1492 and 1525, as mentioned earlier. Indeed, Seville became one of the most populated cities in Europe, on par with Naples, Moscow or Lisbon, and only behind Istanbul, Paris and London.

Figure 8 The port of Seville in 1660

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View from Triana with the boat bridge on the left and the Torre del Oro on the right.

Demographic growth increased pressure on the city's residential fabric. The single-family home, inherited from the Muslim period, began to be fragmented into smaller units that were intensively used because of room rentals. Parts of the population with fewer resources started to settle in the northern half of the walled enclosure, which had remained almost empty since Almoravid times. There, the *corrales de vecinos* ('neighbours courtyards') emerged, forming a collective housing typology organized around courtyards. The courtyards were surrounded by wooden galleries that provided access to tens of apartments, in some cases more than one hundred. The private spaces were reduced to small bedrooms. The rest of the rooms (bathroom, kitchen, laundry room, etc.) were intended for shared use.

The immense wealth generated from trade with the Americas that benefitted the Spanish crown and Seville's city council made it possible to undertake a great architectural transformation. Facilities such as the new town hall, the Cinco Llagas Hospital and the Royal Prison were built. Between the port and the Alcazar, a sort of financial district emerged, with the customs office, the merchants' exchange market and the Royal Spanish Mint setting up there. All these monuments were built in the Renaissance style. Convents joined them. Not only mendicant orders sponsored them but monarchs and noble families also built convents, often building them on top of their palaces. Indeed, funding convents had become a sign of social prestige. Thirty of the convents were built in the sixteenth century, with a further 20 built in the seventeenth century. Together with the 20 existing convents and those newly constructed in the periphery, the total number of convents exceeded 100. The massive presence of convents, together with countless parochial churches, collegiate churches, chapels and oratories, turned Seville into a gigantic sacred space.

As monuments of the political and economic powers, most of these religious buildings were built in the Renaissance style. Seville's built environment was in fact being de-Islamized. In the sixteenth century, Spain was emerging as a modern state. The Catholic Kings first and the Emperor Carlos V later aimed for an artistic expression that showed the territorial and religious unity of the nation. It was clear that the humble, popular and localist Mudejar architecture could not meet such expectations.

The de-Islamization of Seville also affected its urban morphology. The street network and allotment structure underwent significant alterations. New streets were opened up inside the blocks and others were expanded. The *adarves* began to disappear, as were the arches and floors projecting over the streets. But the most important transformation was the opening of plazas. This type of public space was alien to the Islamic city, where this role was played by the *sahns* of the mosques. About 80 new plazas were created in Seville in the sixteenth century. The main one was San Francisco Square, around which the new town hall, the Royal Court and the Royal Prison were built. However, most of the plazas were opened by noble families in front of their palaces to increase visibility. The Dueñas Palace, the Pilatos House, the Guzmán Palace, comprising large compounds of buildings and gardens, also altered the hyper-fragmented allotment structure of the Islamic urban fabric. The modest, hidden Muslim patios were replaced by sumptuous porticoed patios that ostentatiously opened onto the street. The impact on the urban scene was astounding. Imposing marble gates imitating triumphal arches, windows crowned with coats of arms, and balconies of Roman inspiration emerged in the silent sequence of blind walls that characterized the domestic landscape of old Isbiliya.

The de-Islamization process of Seville, which had proceeded very slowly after the Christian conquest of the city, clearly accelerated during the sixteenth century, both at an architectural and an urban scale. In 1526, the Venetian ambassador, Andrea Navajero, described Seville as the Spanish city that most resembled Italian ones, the city where, "the wide and beautiful streets as well as the most beautiful palaces in Spain" could be found. At the end of the century, Miguel de Cervantes wrote: "Oh great Seville, triumphant Rome in courage and nobility". The city had become the 'New Rome', the metropolis of a transcontinental Christian empire.

The transfer of Mudejar architecture to the New World

The arrival of Columbus in America coincided with the defeat of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada in 1492. Spain closed the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula, which had lasted eight centuries, and opened up the colonization of the Americas, which would last for several more. This explains the similarities that existed between these two processes. In both cases, the military conquest was accompanied by a religious one, with architecture playing an important role in both.

Spanish monastic orders used architecture to engage with the Indigenous people of America. Sometimes they placed their temples on top of Aztec or Mayan ceremonial centres. Sometimes they tried to adapt to indigenous customs. The 'open-air churches' responded to the habits of the Mesoamerican Indians, who used to carry out their activities outdoors (some historians talk of 'Indigenous claustrophobia'). In these churches, where the open spaces far exceeded roofed ones, masses were celebrated outdoors in a porticoed courtyard where four *capillas posas* were arranged in each corner. They were roofed but open chapels, which allowed Indigenous peoples to worship the Christian images from the outside.

Cultural syncretism was another colonization strategy. Although in the sixteenth century Mudejar architecture, the greatest exponent of Hispanic-Muslim cultural syncretism, was in decline in Spain, it would be transferred to the Americas. The reason being that, at the time, it had become a typically Hispanic and Christian trademark, which made it a perfect tool for cultural colonization.

Neither Mudejars nor Moriscos were allowed to travel to the Americas, therefore it was Spanish carpenters who exported Mudejar art. Once again, they did it out of pure pragmatism; Mudejar was, after all, the shapes and techniques they knew, the designs they remembered, and the spaces they nostalgically associated with their birthplaces. Regarding the Almohad-like listels of the Mexican monasteries, Spanish art historian Diego de Angulo (d. 1986) comments: "They were the last thing that the master stonemason or the missionary friar contemplated after embarking in Seville, from the stern of the ship that was to take them to the Indies".

Afterwards, *criollos* (American Spaniards), Indians and mestizos spread Mudejar architecture across the continent. Several circumstances facilitated this. Wood was abundant, and stone was scarce. Moreover, wood performed better than stone in the event of earthquakes, which is rather recurrent in the New World. For these reasons, religious orders took master carpenters and carpentry treatises with them. As in Spain, American artisan guilds were governed by local ordinances. The Carpentry Ordinances of Mexico (1568), for example, followed the guidelines of Seville's 1443 norms (many copies of them circulated throughout the continent). These ordinances described the tests that aspiring carpenters had to pass to be admitted to the guild. Most of them consisted of crafting Mudejar pieces, for example, making a lace semi-sphere, building a square *muqarnas* ceiling, assembling a three-coffered panelled *armadura*, and so on.

Treaties and ordinances made possible the quick dissemination of Mudejar carpentry throughout the Americas. However, although the structural base was similar, it developed differently in each evangelization centre depending on the master carpenters working in the area, the available materials, and the working tradition of the local Indigenous population. Mexico and Peru, the centres of the two vice-royalties by which Spain divided the New World, would display the regional modulations of American Mudejar architecture.

In the case of Mexico, it is known that the pre-Hispanic education system included carpentry trades (wooden roofs were common in Aztec homes). There was, therefore, a qualified Indigenous workforce that Spaniards put at their service, a similar fact to what happened with the Mudejars in the Iberian Peninsula. During the first third of the sixteenth century, numerous Mexican churches and chapels were adorned with Mudejar ceilings, for example, Tlaxcala's San Francisco church (Figure 9), but also cathedrals. The scheme of Seville's Mudejar churches (three naves separated by arches on columns and covered by *par y nudillos* ceilings) was used to build the cathedrals in Puebla de los Angeles, Oaxaca, Morelia, and other places. Even the central nave of the original building of Mexico City's cathedral, built in 1532, was covered with an *armadura* in 1584.

Figure 9 Mudejar ceiling, San Francisco church in Tlaxcala, Mexico

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In Peru, the dissemination of Mudejar architecture was more problematic, mainly because of the scarcity of wood in the Peruvian highlands. Nevertheless, a very simple and easy-to-build type of Mudejar parochial church prevailed. It consisted of a single nave covered with a *par y nudillos* ceiling. The lack of long timber sections explains why the nave was narrow and long: the *nudillos*, which determined its width, had to be brought from Larecaya (Bolivia) more than 200 km away along bumpy roads. It is known that two master carpenters and a master bricklayer signed a contract in 1590 with the governor of Chucuito to build 16 such churches in the Collao region.

Just like in Mexico, Peruvian Mudejar architecture was not confined to building modest rural parochial churches (Figure 10). In 1551, the single nave of Lima's second cathedral was covered with a wooden coffered ceiling. Many other churches in the capital followed this example: Santa Ana (1553), Encarnación (1562), San Pablo (1569), La Concepción (1573), and others. The many earthquakes that hit Lima in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries destroyed most of these Mudejar ceilings, which were replaced by stone vaults.

Figure 10 Mudejar coffered ceiling, San Pedro church in Andahuaylillas, Peru

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Conclusion

Already by ca. 1600, Berbers who looked at the doors of Marrakech's Kutubiyya Mosque could admire the eight-pointed stars, wooden *sebkas* and vegetal-trace laceworks, that is, the same shapes observed by the Aztecs on the roofs of the Huejotzingo's posas chapels, or the Incas who contemplated the roofs of Cusco's churches. For one hundred years, Seville had been Europe's central pillar of the Islamic-Christian bridge connecting North Africa and the Americas.

This pillar collapsed in the seventeenth century. The devastating flood of 1626 was followed by economic bankruptcies, famines, revolts and epidemics (the 1649 epidemic claimed 60,000 lives, reducing Seville's population by half). The *coup de grâce* was delivered by the river; the aquatic artery that ensured Seville's political and economic power for centuries. The sedimentation of materials at the bottom of the riverbed made navigation increasingly difficult. In addition, the ships' draft increased greatly; for example, sixteenth century galleons had a load capacity of 300 tons, whereas those of the first three decades of the seventeenth century carried up to 600 tons. This fact forced more and more ships to dock in the open port of Cadiz, whose defence structures had been modernized.

The downfall of Seville was guaranteed in 1680 when the monarchy decided that the Indies fleets would be loaded and unloaded in Cadiz. The officials who controlled the entry of gold, silver and other merchandise into the port of Seville were thus transferred to Cadiz. They were followed by merchants, bankers, monks and the military. Seville's golden age had thus come to an abrupt end.

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Epilogue

By Elena Paskaleva and Michael Turner

The vicissitudes of history

The cities and ports that form the subject of this edition are mainly located in the vast region of Central Eurasia, defined here as an area between the Karakoram Pass and the Bosphorus. The rich history of this territory is closely intertwined with the global interactions, trade exchanges and technology transfers that connected the ancient empires of East and West. The natural landscapes of the Silk Roads have provided an enduring backdrop to the human and political changes over time, allowing them to adapt and evolve with the journeys and narratives of the peoples and nations inhabiting the region.

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, Central Eurasia fell victim to political turmoil, fragmentation and stagnation. Patterns of global commerce had changed, and maritime routes that bypassed Central Eurasia were now favoured. The adoption of military technological inventions lagged behind, and there was a brain drain of artisans and poets from the region to Mughal India during this period. Imperial Russia (1721–1917) approached slowly from the north, establishing fortresses and Cossack colonies from 1740 onwards, while Britain and Qing China (1636–1912) also became more active in the region. In 1865, Tashkent was conquered by the Russians and, soon after, the khanates were abolished or turned into protectorates of the Russian Empire.

As shown by Svetlana Gorshenina (Chapter 13, Part I), Central Asians living in the steppes and oases between the Tian Shan and the Iranian Plateau were regarded as second-class citizens in Imperial Russia. Their lands supplied raw materials, while cultural identities were colonialized. As an area of economic resources, but also of strategic importance, railways and telegraphs were built, and many agricultural colonists were brought in from Russia. Consequently, Central Asia was parachuted into modernity within a few decades. In order to organize the imperial administration and to civilize the local population (*inorodtsy*), ethnographers, architects, artists and scientists were put to work.

Some of the charismatic legacies, oral practices and material artefacts that had survived the pre-Islamic Persian civilization and the glory of Islamic empires were appropriated as ideological tools of the Russian imperial programme to bring literacy to the nomads or to rescue folk art and indigenous building traditions. Turkestan was incorporated into the Russian Empire and was effectively ruled by governors-general who were answerable to the tsar in St. Petersburg. The most famous of whom was Konstantin von Kaufmann (1818–1882).

In a conscious attempt to record the architecture and urban development of the vast unknown territories, Von Kaufmann commissioned the creation of the *Turkestan Album*. This was a huge undertaking, comprising 1,200 photographs, architectural plans, drawings and maps, produced between 1865 and 1872. We have seen that the network of trade routes had flourished in this region for a long period of time. The term 'Silk Roads' itself (later attributed to the German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, in 1877) was an immediate hit, while the romantic connotations of the 'Silk Roads' still continue to inspire travellers, traders and governments. Finally, by 1889, the conquest of Central Asia was complete. A unified Turkestan, reflecting the imperial colonial situation, was deemed too large and too pan-Turkic to continue. Moreover, the efforts to 'map' Central Asia and its inhabitants ultimately resulted in the formation of Soviet Republics after the fall of the tsar in 1917. Given the long-standing cultural diversity and heterogenous nature of Central Asia, the establishment of socialist republics between 1920 and 1929, based on the notion of distinct nationalities, was bound to be problematic.

The monuments and their architecture of the Silk Road cities and ports, explored in this edition, are enduring landmarks of the rise and fall of premodern dynasties and empires. The vicissitudes of their history represent an ebb and flow dynamic, which has defined the Silk Roads and Routes throughout their existence. Today, these realms and routes fall under the jurisdiction of different independent political entities, and the current borders of most of these states are relatively recent. Afghanistan emerged in the middle of the eighteenth century with the rise of the Durrani Empire (1747 -1842) and has since experienced a very tumultuous history, especially as a contested zone by British and Russian colonial powers: the ill-fated battle ground of the 'Great Game'. In contrast, the designated territory of 'Iran' has been in use since ancient times, whose territorial borders have been subject to change, depending on the rulers of the time. While the present-day nation state of Iran originates in the Safavid Empire (1501–1722), it found its definitive form only in the nineteenth century. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan acquired independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and they find their origins in the creation of the Soviet Republics by Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s.

The last 150 years have dramatically changed the face of the Silk Roads and Routes. Technological advances in maritime transportation and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 have revived exchanges, competing with the overland roads.

Caravans had to follow the natural topography of riverbeds and valleys, making the journeys long and arduous, while ships travelled more rapidly from the ports on the Persian Gulf and the Indian sub-continent to Southeast Asia and further East, transporting a wide range of goods, tradespeople and artisans. This large-scale two-way trade in spices, gems, precious works of art and religious objects helped spread vibrant artistic traditions and new technologies across the region, thereby generating inter-cultural and religious exchanges across the East and West edges of the Silk Routes.

The urban fabric and their monuments discussed here became to be seen as part of the cultural heritage of these different nation states and, as such, subject to diverse national discourses constructed on imperial or colonial legacies. At the same time, however, these monuments bear witness to a shared imperial history of a premodern cultural space that is often referred to as the Turko-Persianate world. Dynastic rulers, usually with a nomadic Turkic background, established large empires over sedentary and nomadic peoples in an area spanning present-day Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Asia Minor and Northern India.

In this vast area, Persian language and culture dominated, or was adopted, creating a political and cultural Turko-Persian symbiosis that thrived from the tenth to the eighteenth century. The emergence of colonial powers in the Mughal Empire (1526 – 1857) of the Indian subcontinent and in Central Asia heralded the end of this Turko-Persian imperial age.

The colonial approach has been used effectively to colonize Central Asia, a battleground between East and West, totally disrupting and suppressing its spatial and cultural relationships. The national delimitations of the 1920s and 1930s, imposed by the Soviet regime, cut across the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of the peoples who inhabited this region. In an attempt to maintain a peaceful and dynamic interaction between the local multi-ethnic communities, the Soviet authorities created a set of notions and examples of idealized and imagined traditions and identities, deprived of any religious associations. During this period, the Islamic monuments of the cities along the Silk Roads were rebuilt through numerous restoration campaigns led by Russian archaeologists and architects, and inspired by the credos of the European 'Enlightenment'. Their deliberate attempts to link the diversity of Buddhist, Zoroastrian and Islamic iconography to Greek and Roman architectural traditions have erased the architectural traces of intercultural exchanges, especially, between the Timurid and the Ming Empires in the fifteenth century. Thus, the promotion of ideological heritage practices and political narratives has obliterated and ignored the many traces of interior and exterior decoration that were created as a result of the cultural interactions and exchange of artisans and ideas along the Silk Roads. Furthermore, the city centres of former imperial capitals, such as Khiva and Samarqand, were transformed into 'museums in the open' and celebrated as fabled architectural oases along the Silk Roads, in stark contrast with their bustling bazaars and vibrant living heritage.

Sadly, very many buildings and their decoration have suffered from the recurrent earthquakes and historical vicissitudes that have marked Central Eurasia ever since. Some have been permanently lost, others have been heavily restored in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Colonizers' attitudes towards heritage and Soviet planning norms continued unabated without posing any serious questions or re-evaluations. Legislation regulating urban conservation and architectural practice has not been appropriately updated. Furthermore, the breakdown of local heritage preservation bodies and mechanisms, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent independence, has resulted in a vacuum of knowledge transfer and proper maintenance. Indeed, there is an urgent need to train heritage professionals.

Within the post-Soviet cultural space, the use of governmental texts and vocabulary has redefined heritage, which has taken on new and sometimes unintended meanings amid socio-economic change, political upheaval and the re-assertion of religious identities. As a result of this approach, select places of national renown have become more prominent and given rise to a pantheon of salient local heroes. Unfortunately, the current legacy of modern political elites is often drawn from authorised imposed discourses and harmful urban regeneration measures that, for example, do not conform to the pilgrimage practices of the majority of Muslim populations. Although heroic figures are commemorated with large statues dominating the cityscapes, their permanence is based on estranged politicized narratives, as is the case with the medieval ruler Timur (r. 1370–1405) in his presumed birthplace, Shahr-i Sabz in Uzbekistan. Here, between 2013 and 2015, in the 'Historic Centre of Shakhrisyabz' (as inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000) the old bazaar and many residential buildings were demolished. The axial European urban planning approaches, in which Timur was glorified, resulted in Shahr-i Sabz being added to the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2016. Thus, the space held for these important historic figures is transformed, with governments becoming the guardians of the commemorative narratives of heroic deeds.

The local cultural markers and commemorative spaces can only be understood if analysed as inherently nuanced and mutable over time and space. This should hardly come as a surprise. After all, tradition, history and historiography have always been moving targets, subject to diverse interpretations. Whether inhabited or abandoned, architectural sites have never been immune to transformative change, decay, damage inflicted by natural disasters, and re-construction, that is, reflecting the general priorities of the times. Greater concern about preserving and restoring the authentic fabric of a historical site is a recent development and one fraught with controversy. Is there a widely accepted standard of preservation or conservation, and if so, how can it be practically implemented in a location where little original material has survived? All too often, even with the best intentions, restoration measures can inadvertently construct an imagined past.

Commodifying heritage

If lured by the appeal of travel along the Silk Roads and Routes, whether to Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, Japan or China, one should arguably anticipate witnessing the impact of modern development for economic, political or other reasons. That is, expecting to recapture the historic views and the buildings 'as they once were' would clearly be naive, even if such sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List. The *Turkestan Album* has given way to Instagram and Facebook, and many of the photographs in this publication come from the UNESCO Youth Eyes on the Silk Roads International Photo Contest, which received over 7,000 entries.

Another example of the perennial success of the 'Silk Roads' label is Peter Frankopan's 2015 bestseller, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*. In this seminal work, a strong case is made for a less Eurocentric approach to global history, which follows in the footsteps of a number of other historians who have argued for the centrality of the Silk Roads and, in particular, the place of Central Eurasia in world history.

Recent regeneration initiatives in the name of tourism have yet again changed the urban landscapes of the Silk Roads' cities and ports, too often with a detrimental effect on their unique architectural fabric. There is now great interest in travelling along sections of the Silk Roads, with upgraded caravanserais on the overland roads and cruise ships visiting port cities on the maritime routes. In 2023, a nomination of 54 out of hundreds of Persian caravanserais were inscribed on the World Heritage List. Nevertheless, modern developments have raised serious concerns over the protection of these historically important remains and their contexts. As noted by ICOMOS, the Advisory Body to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this has resulted in controversial treatment of some historical sites. The issue goes beyond undertaking projects to modernize living spaces and promoting economic development, frequently raising more complicated questions of perceptions about identity and tradition. Indeed, political regimes or economic interests may have views that conflict with scholarly expertise.

One of the key endeavours promoting the current global interest in the Silk Roads is China's new Silk Roads initiative, a trade and development strategy that began in 2013 as 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), later renamed in 2016 as the Belt and Road Initiative. This project demonstrates the growing importance of Central Eurasia as a focal point of geopolitical trade, as well as the political ambitions of world powers to rekindle and boost ancient commercial relations. However, the potential of this initiative goes beyond economic gains, given that it can contribute towards creating new regional infrastructure, urbanism and architecture, and generate educational skills, becoming a tool for poverty alleviation and social inequality by enabling socio-economic development in the participating countries.

Nevertheless, the obstacles that need to be overcome across Central Eurasia (and its eastern and western edges) go beyond economic incentives with the century-old urban fabric of cities undergoing major transformations, dictated by the ambitions and objectives of local and regional governments. Addressing these challenges requires a careful reading of the rich palimpsest of historical layers, and a paradigm shift in the dialogue between decision-makers and professionals to adopt culture as a driver for sustainable development. This is essential to ensure the urgent care for the actual monuments, whose building materials and structures were never designed to meet the climate challenges of the twenty-first century or the Disneyfication extravaganzas of contemporary consumerism. Innovation should be directed towards protecting the architectural heritage of the Silk Roads, with new materials, values and traditions based on the legacies explored in the two parts of this anthology. The speed of change and the travel times on land and water have undergone exponential transformation. New dimensions to the Silk Roads Initiative should be carefully planned by engaging the 2005 Vienna Memorandum when considering contemporary interventions in historic urban areas as well as the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape and the 2016 UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda. Indeed, it is important to safeguard the past by revitalizing the present so as to propose a reinvigorated and sustainable future.

Since 1988, UNESCO has sought to better understand the rich history and shared legacy of the historic Silk Roads and the ways in which cultures have mutually influenced each other. This Volume is one of the initiatives of the UNESCO Silk Roads Programme, supported by Azerbaijan, China, Germany, Kazakhstan and Oman, to collect and make accessible worldwide scholarship on the Silk Roads, thereby engaging a global audience for a deeper understanding of the diversity and interdependence of the cultures and peoples along these routes.

In 2014, after years of preparation, the 'Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor' became one of the first cultural 'corridors' to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, embodying the principles of cultural diversity, heritage, and peaceful cooperation fostered by UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention. This 5,000 km section of the extensive Silk Roads network is a transnational site that crosses China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, stretching from Chang'an/Luoyang (the central capital of China in the Han and Tang dynasties) to the Zhetysu region of Central Asia. Thirty-three components are included in the routes network, such as capital cities and palace complexes of various empires, trading settlements, Buddhist cave temples, ancient paths, beacon towers, sections of the Great Wall, fortifications, and religious buildings. In 2023, thanks to the substantial support of the International Institute for Central Asian Studies in Samarqand, the 'Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor', nominated by Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, also joined the list of Silk Roads World Heritage properties. A third nomination, the Fergana-Syrdarya Corridor, focusing on the system of agricultural water canals used for irrigation, fortifications, and the coexistence of different religions on the territory of the local urban settlements, is currently under preparation.

Challenges and new interpretations

In order to promote local tourism UNESCO developed, in 2016, a *Training Handbook for Silk Road Heritage Guides*, available in English and Russian. It is designed as a source and reference book for tourist guides and heritage professionals working in the countries of the Silk Roads. This handbook is a result of the collaboration between the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

This example is a clear indication of the need to recognize the importance of local multi-ethnic histories, which are particularly relevant in Central Eurasia. The region has a rich past, offering a palimpsest of temporal polities and architectural monuments, which have to be treated with the utmost care and not at the cost of breakneck tourism development. Although tourism has been driving recent governmental projects in Turkistan (Kazakhstan) and Bukhara (Uzbekistan), the potential of tourism to exert *positive* impacts on local economies has not been adequately explored.

The relationship between World Heritage properties and tourism is longstanding and complex and should benefit from engaging the holistic approach of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Although tourism is regarded by many as a vehicle to facilitate heritage preservation and local socio-economic development through revenue generation, it is frequently criticized as a conflict 'inducer' for prioritizing profitability over the general public's interests. If one takes a quick stroll along the streets of Bukhara, dotted with cappuccino terraces and ubiquitous market stalls, one might wonder whether the right balance can ever be struck. It is perhaps time to step back from hasty regeneration projects that promise immediate returns from short-term hotel stays and tourist throngs. Tourism has become the modern-day commodity panacea with new travellers and transient communities using social media, such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok, to transpose the written diary of events and inventories of goods.

The authors of this volume have, many times, underscored the need for the paradigm of sustainability to be incorporated into the management and planning of sites to conserve their universal values, which is an obligation of States Parties under the World Heritage Convention. However, decision-making processes in managing these and other heritage properties have traditionally relied on a top-down, professional approach. This approach can potentially overlook the 'stakeholder' dimension and thus fail to achieve the goals needed for effective management and sustainable development. After all, this heritage belongs to the local communities on the Silk Roads and Routes and their voices must be heard and documented. This volume brings the particularity of the architecture, monuments and urbanism of the Silk Roads to a wider public thus providing for the virtual reality of the past to share a common future.

Glossary

abr – cloud patterning; marbled designs

adarves – dead-end narrow alleys

arārba – carriage

armadura – a gable roof with sloping beams (*pares*) supported on the walls and on the ridge of the roof, joined together by transverse beams (*nudillos*)

bāb – gate, door

band-i rūmī – Anatolian knot patterns, geometric interlace

bannā'ī – lit. mason-like, tiles with geometric patterning

bārgāh – guy ropes, used to support the Mongol ruler's large tent; court

bedestan – Ottoman term used for the central covered market around which the entire commercial sector of a classical Ottoman city is organized

bīrūn (***tashkārī, dishān ḥaulī***) – outer, external

bāgh – a garden, park; cf. *chahārbāgh* – a fourfold garden

bannā' – a mason, a builder

baraka – a blessing, divine favour

chārdāra – a structure with four doors

chillakhāna – a small structure or room used for a forty-day fast and seclusion

columned īwān – a covered semi-open space supported by wooden columns

corrales de vecinos – neighbours courtyards

cumba (***şahnişin***) – a characteristic bow window in Ottoman architecture

dado – the lower part of an interior wall in an Islamic structure, often ornamented

dakhma – a rectangular burial platform in an open enclosed area

Dār al-imāra – lit. House of Command, refers to the administrative center or the governor's residence within an Islamic city

darskhāna – an auditorium, lecture hall (usually in a corner room of a madrasa)

darūn (***ichkārī, ichan ḥaulī***) – inner, interior

darwāzakhāna – a gate, entrance; a structure that forms the main entrance to a complex

dawlatkhāna – lit. Abode of Felicity, a palace, a royal-administrative precinct

devşirme – forced recruitment of Christian youths to serve in the Ottoman palace or army

dihqān – a member of a class of lesser nobles in Sasanian and early Muslim Iran; for local lords in Iran and Transoxiana; and for peasants in modern Persian, Tajik, and the Central Asian Turkic languages

dihlīz – a vestibule, anteroom

dālān – an entryway

dīvār – a wall

faqīh – an expert in Islamic law

feng-shui (Chinese)/***fu-sui*** (Japanese) – geomancy

firangī – elements of Frankish or European inspiration

ganch – a type of plaster carving

garmkhāna – a washing room with hot water in a bathhouse

gaz – a length measuring unit of approx. 75 cm. The exact dimensions fluctuated in different historical periods

girih – decorative Islamic geometric patterns used in architecture

guldasta – cylindric towers framing a massive portal

gunbad – a domed building, often a mausoleum

gūr – a grave or a tomb

gūristān – a cemetery

gūrkhāna – the tomb chamber in a mausoleum

guzār – a communal center of a residential area

haft-rangī – lit. seven colours, patterns of up to seven colours used in tile mosaic; a glazed tile technique similar to *cuerda seca* in which the design is incised

hākūra – a domestic garden

ḥammām – a bathhouse

handasa – geometry, cf. *'ilm al-handasah* – the science of geometry

ḥaulī – an inner courtyard

ḥawz – an artifical open pool or cistern with a rectangular or octagonal form

ḥaẓīra – a walled or fenced funerary enclosure

hazārbāf – lit. thousand-weave, all-over patterns in brick and tile; a glazing tile technique, also known as *bannā'ī*

ḥiṣn – fortress, crucial in ancient and medieval warfare, serving as strongholds against sieges and military attacks

hosh – an enclosed family compound

ḥujra – a small room in a madrasa or a *khānaqāh*

imāmzāda – the descendant of a Shī'ī *imām* and the shrine of such a person

'imaret – soup kitchen administered by a charitable organization

islīmī – spiral curves, arabesque ivy patterns

īwān *(**eyvān**)* – a deep arched portal

jaldetas – secondary and smaller beams in a coffered ceiling

jalis – perforated stone or marble screen, usually carved in geometric forms

jamā'at-khāna – congregational place, meeting room

jānvar-sāzī – animal designs

kārkhāna – workshop

kāshī – tiles

kāshī-kārī – glazed ceramic tilework used on a revetment

kāshīn – sand-based, porous material used in porcelain-type pottery

kāshgarcha – a winter porch in Central Asia

khadimkhāna – a massage room in a bathhouse

khān – a fortified building, typically of two stories, used by merchants to shelter their livestock, goods, and themselves overnight, people above, beasts below, and an open courtyard facilitating trade

khānaqāh (***khānqāh***) – a Sufi hospice, lodge with a large hall for *zikr*, often with cells for the temporary shelter of wandering dervishes and pilgrims

khargāh – a trellis tent, serving as a private chamber for the Mongol ruler

khayma – a tent

khisht – mud bricks

khiyābān – main avenue

khiṭā'ī – floral motifs of Chinese inspiration

khunukkhāna – a washing room with cold water in a bathhouse

kitābdār – a librarian

kitābkhāna – site of manuscript making, storage, and repair; library workshop

qāsh (***kosh***) – an ensemble of two or three buildings forming a public square; original meaning eyebrow; the urban term reflects the symmetrical pairing along an orthogonal axis

köşk – a fortified structure or castle, although this usage is less common compared to its definition as a pavilion or leisure palace

külliye – an imperial complex in Ottoman architecture that included religious and medical schools, baths, public kitchens, libraries, markets and other structures

kyr – water-resistant mortar

lājvardina – tiling technique; after an initial firing to establish the dark blue background, the tile underwent a second firing to set the overglazed details and the carefully cut pieces of gold leaf, creating a glimmering surface

lungīkhāna – a room in a bathhouse where men were given a loincloth

madīna – city

madrasa – a school for the study of the Islamic sciences and related subjects

maḥmiya – protected, walled

maktab – an Islamic traditionl school

mīnā'ī – enamelled

maqṣūra – elevated platform in front of the *miḥrāb*

masjid – a mosque

masjid-i jāmiʿ – a Congregational, Friday mosque

mazār – a shrine, holy burial place

mihmānkhāna – a guestroom

mīl – a historical Arabic unit of length, lying between 1,8 to 2 km.

miḥrāb – arched niche in the *qibla* wall of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca

miʿmār – an architect

minbar – a pulpit in a mosque from where the Friday sermon is delivered

miyānsarāy (***miyānkhāna***) – rooms situated above the entrance hall of a madrasa

mudarris – a teacher, professor in a madrasa

muhandis – an engineer; geometrician

muqarnas – a stalactite composition marking the transition from a rectangular structure to a dome; cf. *muqarba* (Spanish: mocárabe), an ornate vault

naqqāsh – designer/artist; *naqqāshī*– design, decoration, painting

nakkaṣhane – site of manuscript making, storage, and repair specifically in the Ottoman context

necropolis – a large, memorial cemetery with elaborate tomb monuments

pakhsa – rammed earth

panjara – a screen, grating, (grille) window with a decorative lattice with a geometric pattern, usually made of *ganch* or wood, occasionally of terracotta

pietra dura – hard stone mosaic

pīshṭāq – an entrance portal with an arched niche in the architecture of Central Asia

purnagatha – Indian motifs, such as the 'overflowing' vase or lotus garlands (*padmajala*)

qadamgāh – lit. place of the footprints, used as a synonym for a memorial complex

qā'im – an attendant in a bathhouse

qālib (***kālbud***) – wooden model or template

qanāt (***kārīz***) – an underground canal system for transporting water from an aquifer or water well to the surface

qal'a (***kala***) – citadel or fortress

qapaq – mounted archery contest

qibla – the direction of prayer i.e., Mecca

qishlāq – a village

qubba – a dome, by extension, a masuoleum

quhandīz – fortress or citadel, particularly one that is part of a city's defenses. It usually housed military garrisons and was the location of a last resort during a siege

quṭb – a pole, axis, a title used for significant Sufi figures

ribāṭ (***rabāṭ***) – a term referring to a type of suburb or commercial and craft area surrounding ancient cities in Central Asia; *a fortified frontier station*

ritsuryô – an ancient Japanese social order system comprising codes of laws and ordinances of the centralized government

riwāq – an arched opening, portico or porch; also an arcade around the open courtyard of a mosque

sabīl – a fountain

ṣaghāna – a vaulted crypt for a single burial

sahn – mosque's courtyard

sarāy – palace

sardāba – water reservoir covered by a dome

sebka – a typical Almohad lattice consisting of geometric motifs made in plaster or brick

shahīd – martyr

shahristān – the medieval city proper

shajara, cf. ***nasabnāma*** – a family tree of Prophet Muḥammad

silsila – a genealogy, usually used for the spiritual genealogy of Sufi shaykhs

squinch – a small stone arch or series of arches marking the zone of transition from a rectangular base to a dome

ṣuffa – a raised platform; originally a shelter at the rear of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina

al-ṣunnāʿ – artisans

sūq – market

sarādiq (***sarāparda***) – elite tents surrounded by a textile enclosure

ṣūrat-garī – figural designs

ṭahāratkhāna – a room for ritual ablutions

takīya – hospice, place of charity; place where religious commemorations are performed

ṭāq – an arch, vault; market with a vaulted passageway typical of Bukhara

taṣvīrkhāna – site of manuscript making, storage, and repair specifically Mughal context

tazar (***aryk***) – a canal

ṭavīla – a stable for horses and beasts of burden

tīm – a covered market specialized in a specific trade

teppa/teppe (***tobe***) – in Central Asian archaeology, referring to a mound or hill that is often the site of ancient settlements, fortifications, or burial grounds, cf. Near Eastern *tells*

tortkul – lit. rectangle in Kazakh; quadrangular fortification, often referred to by archaeologists as ancient towns or fortified settlements

ṭūgh – a high pole with a yak or horse tail in the pommel used to mark a holy place

tympanum – frontal wall surface over the arched niche of an entrance portal

wāq-wāq – animals, beasts, and grotesque faces associated with a legendary tree having speaking heads

waqf – a charitable endowment, property bequeathed or transferred by a person for the upkeep of an Islamic institution (for example, a mosque or a madrasa), and yielding an income, also used as a provision for the family of the endower

zanāna garden – a garden in the women's quarters of a residence, typical of Mughal India

zāwiya – a Sufi lodge or place of worship

zikrkhāna – room for Sufi recitation of prayers, ritual chanting

ziyārat – a pilgrimage, ritual at a shrine

ziyāratkhāna – antechamber in a mausoleum used by pilgrims for prayer

ziyāratgāh – a memorial complex, cf. *qadamgāh*

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Abulafia, David • *Preface*

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© Tanaya Damle

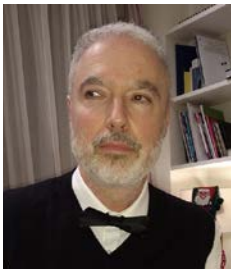
Damle, Tanaya • *Section II. Chapter 6*

Tanaya Damle is an archaeologist with an M.A. in archaeology from the University of Reading, England. She completed her B.A. on ancient Indian culture from the Department of Ancient Indian Culture, Sathaye College in Mumbai. She is also a member of the Board of Studies for the Department of Ancient Indian Culture, Sathaye College. She was the lead resource person for the Ulhas River Valley Cultural Heritage Documentation Project and site manager for the Chaul project. Ms. Damle has also successfully conducted workshops and lectures on archaeology as a visiting faculty and field expert for the Ancient Indian Culture Department of Sathaye College.

© Wei Dong

Dong, Wei • *Section I. Chapter 1*

Wei Dong is a professor of urban planning at the School of Architecture, Southeast University (Nanjing, China). His research expertise is in the fields of urban planning and design, history and theory of urban planning, and cultural heritage conservation. Prof. Dong is the Secretary General of the UNESCO–ICCROM Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM), the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Resource Management, and the director of the Southeast University–UNESCO GIS Centre. He is also the chairman of the History and Theory Division of the Urban Planning Society of China, and a member of the Academic Committee of Historic and Cultural Cities of China, and the Urban Planning Society of China.



© Carlos García Vázquez

García Vázquez, Carlos • *Section IV. Chapter 13*

Carlos García Vázquez is an architect and urban planner, and a full professor at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura of the Universidad de Sevilla (Spain), as well as a visiting professor at the Scuola di Architettura Urbanistica Ingegneria delle Costruzioni of the Politecnico di Milano (Italy). His research fields are urban and architectural heritage, contemporary city and architecture, and social housing. His books include *Cities After Crisis. Reinventing Neighborhood Design from the Ground-Up* (2022), *Teorías e historia de la ciudad contemporánea* (2016, FAD Award 2017), and *Ciudad Hojaldre. Visiones urbanas del siglo XXI* (2004). He is also the co-author of *Intervención en Barriadas Residenciales Obsoletas. Manual de Buenas Prácticas* (2016) and was the principal investigator of the project 'Intervención en barriadas residenciales obsoletas: manual de buenas prácticas' (2013). His appointments and extended research visits include the following foreign universities: Instituto Superior Técnico of Lisbon (2023), Bartlett School of Architecture – University College London (2019), College of Architecture – Tongji University Shanghai (2010), and Northwestern University Chicago (2001).

© Paolo Girardelli

Girardelli, Paolo • *Section III. Chapter 10*

Paolo Girardelli is a professor of art and architectural history in the Department of History of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, where he is based since 1999. He was a Fellow in the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT in 2005/6, an invited researcher at L'Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA) in Paris in 2013, an invited scholar at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence in 2016, and a visiting professor in the Art and Art History Department of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in 2018/19. His research and main publications focus on cross-cultural dialogue and encounters in the architecture and visual culture of the eastern Mediterranean in the late Ottoman period. With Ezio Godoli, he co-edited the volume *Italian Architects and Builders in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Design across Borders* (2017), and he was guest editor of a thematic issue of *Architecture Beyond Europe* on 'The space of diplomacy. Design and beyond', published in 2017.

© Richard Griffiths

Griffiths, Richard • *Introduction*

Richard T. Griffiths is an Emeritus Professor in international studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He trained as an economic historian with research interests in economic development and integration. Since 2019, he has been a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, working on China's Belt and Road Initiative and the history of the Silk Roads. He is currently developing the Silk Road Virtual Museum.

© Deborah Howard

Howard, Deborah • *Section III. Chapter 11*

Deborah Howard is Professor Emerita of architectural history at the University of Cambridge where she is a Fellow of St John's College. She is an Honorary Patron Member of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain and a Fellow of the British Academy. Her principal research interests include the art and architecture of Venice and the Veneto, music and architecture in the Renaissance, and the relationship between Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean. She is the author of Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500 (2000), The Architectural History of Venice. Revised and enlarged edition (2002), co-author, with Laura Moretti, of Sound & Space in Renaissance Venice (2009), and Venice Disputed (2011). Her most recent book, Proto-Industrial Architecture of the Veneto in the Age of Palladio (2021) won a Europa Nostra Heritage Award in 2023.

© Kalandar Kamalkhan

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Kalandar Kamalkhan is a senior lecturer in the Department of Architecture and Built Environment at the Technical University of Mombasa, Kenya. He undertook his undergraduate degree in architecture at the University of Nairobi and his M.A. in infrastructure planning at the University of Stuttgart, Germany. He received his Ph.D. at McGill University (Montreal, Canada) where he specialized in the history and theory of architecture. He worked as an assistant architect with the Kenyan Ministry of Public Works and, after one year, joined the National Museums of Kenya where he worked for over three decades. He was in charge of the conservation of Lamu and Mombasa old towns and other coastal sites and monuments. He has published a book on Swahili architecture, oral tradition and space. Outside of work, he enjoys reading and, occasionally, writing Swahili poetry. He is an ardent soccer supporter and spends most of his free time working on community projects.

© Wiendu Nuryanti

Nuryanti, Wiendu • *Section I. Chapter 4*

With a professional background in architecture and urban planning, Dr. Wiendu Nuryanti is recognized as a prominent expert on culture, tourism and development issues in Indonesia. She was appointed Vice-Minister of Education and Culture for Cultural Affairs (2011–2014) in the Ministry of Education of Indonesia. In 2007, Dr. Nuryanti was appointed a full professor of architecture and tourism planning in the Department of Architecture and Planning at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where she undertook her undergraduate and graduate work, obtaining degrees in architecture and urban planning. She received a scholarship to study in the United States where she obtained her M.A. in architecture and urban design at the University of Wisconsin (1987). She also won a scholarship to the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris, an intensive six-month international program on architecture, culture and development based in Epidaurus, Greece. In 1998, Dr. Nuryanti obtained her Ph.D. in tourism planning and regional development from the universities of Surrey and Bournemouth in the United Kingdom.

© Suraj Pandit

Pandit, Suraj • *Section II. Chapter 6*

Professor Suraj A. Pandit holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in Indian culture and archaeology from Deccan College, Pune (India), and in Buddhist studies from Mumbai University. He has published nine books and more than 60 research articles, including writings on 'Cultural Heritage of Mumbai', 'Water Management System at Kanheri', and 'Kanheri: A Study in its Sustained Patronage'. He is the head of the Department of Ancient Indian Culture and Buddhist Studies, a Dean of the Arts Faculty for Sathaye College, and a member secretary of the Academic Council at Sathaye College, Mumbai. Prof. Pandit has led research projects on the Documentation of Caves in Mumbai Metropolitan Region, the Salcette Exploration project, and the survey of Ulhas River Valley. He has worked as a consultant for the management of Indian sites, including Ajanta, Sarnath and Bodhgaya. He is also the leading author for the books *Mumbai Beyond Bombay* (2020), *Age of Traikuakas: Coins, Inscription and Art* (2012), and *Stories in Stones* (2013). He has organized courses on heritage management and established international relations with the Department of Tourism, University of Brussels.

© Michael Pante

Pante, Michael • *Section I. Chapter 3*

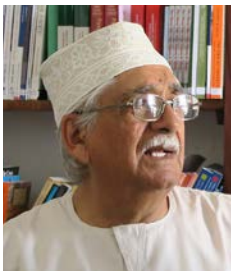
Michael D. Pante is an associate professor at the Department of History, Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines), and chief editor of *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*. He is the author of *A Capital City at the Margins: Quezon City and Urbanization in the Twentieth Century Philippines* (2019).

© Elena Paskaleva

Paskaleva, Elena • *Editor* • *Epilogue*

Elena Paskaleva is an assistant professor in critical heritage studies at Leiden University, the Netherlands. She studied architecture at Bauhaus University Weimar and art history at Jena University, Germany. She received her doctorate in Islamic architecture from Leiden University. In 2014, Dr. Paskaleva was an associate at the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University. Her current research focuses on the material culture of Central Asia, particularly the history and socio-political importance of Timurid architecture. She has curated three exhibitions of nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs and the history of Central Asian jewellery and textiles at Leiden University. She teaches postgraduate classes on critical heritage studies, the politics of heritage in the Middle East, and the history of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

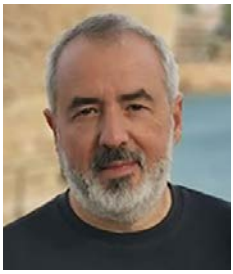
She is the author of *Silk Road Cities Documented through Vintage Photographs, Prints and Postcards* (2019), and the author and co-editor of *Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia: Texts, Traditions and Practices, 10th-21st Centuries* (2023).



© Abdul Sheriff

Sheriff, Abdul • *Section II. Chapter 9*

Professor Abdul Sheriff is a third generation Zanzibari whose writings are focused on the history of Zanzibar and the Indian Ocean. He joined the University of California in Los Angeles for his B.A. in geography (1964) and M.A. in African history (1966). He then studied at SOAS, University of London, for his Ph.D. in African history (1971). He then joined the University of Dar es Salaam where he taught African history, and was awarded a professorship in 1982. In 1993, he returned to Zanzibar to set up a museum in the former Sultan's Palace that became the Museum of History & Culture of Zanzibar, and the Swahili Coast in the House of Wonders. He established the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute (ZIORI) (2008–2014) to encourage research on the Indian Ocean.



© Jordi Tresserras Juan

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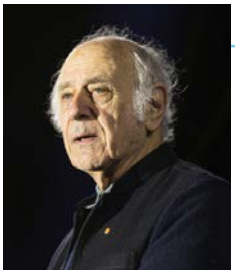
Jordi Tresserras Juan is an expert in cultural heritage management and cultural and creative tourism. He holds a Ph.D. in geography and history from the Universitat de Barcelona. Since 1999, he is a professor at the Cultural Management Program at the Universitat de Barcelona and, since 2012, he is a director of LABPATC Lab of Heritage, Creativity and Cultural Tourism, a spin-off of Universitat de Barcelona and the Network of Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development (IBERTUR). He was assistant professor of cultural tourism at the Center for Latin American and the Caribbean Studies at New York University (2001). He has been a consultant for international organizations, including the Council of Europe, European Commission, ILO-UN, UNESCO, UNWTO and the World Bank, as well as national cooperation agencies, such as AECID, Alliance Française, Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo, Cooperation Suisse, GIZ, HIVOS, and JICA. He is a member of the UNESCO Chair UNITWIN Network on Culture, Tourism and Development, the University Network of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and the Culture and Gastronomic Tourism Product Clubs at the Catalan Tourism Board.



© Michael Turner

Turner, Michael • *Editor* • *Epilogue*

Professor Michael Turner is the UNESCO Chairholder in Urban Design and Conservation Studies at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. He is a member of many professional and academic bodies, a founding member of the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Places of Religion and Ritual and the UN-Habitat initiative on Heritage and the Metropolis. With over two decades of contributions to UNESCO, he has accompanied the debate on 'Historic Urban Landscapes' since its inception. Elected to the World Heritage Committee in 2005, he served as its vice-chair during the 2007/8 term. He is a special advisor to the World Heritage Centre, providing international assistance in the fields of urban design and conservation. In Asia, he has been active in supporting the conservation of heritage in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, with missions to Baku, Samarqand, Bukhara and Shahr-i Sabz and advising on World Heritage in Beijing and Shanghai.

© Qiang Wang

Wang, Qiang • *Section I. Chapter 2*

Dr. Qiang Wang is an author and an expert specializing in maritime history and heritage. His notable publication *Legendary Port of Maritime Silk Routes; Zayton (Quanzhou)* (2020) delves into Quanzhou's historical significance as a major port along the maritime Silk Routes. During his tenure as a research associate at the University of California, Irvine (2013/14), Dr. Wang began his scholarly pursuits in maritime history and cultural heritage. His dedication to preserving and promoting historical monuments and sites in Quanzhou was evident during his involvement with Quanzhou's World Heritage nomination (2016/17) and the UNESCO Silk Roads projects. Dr. Wang expanded his knowledge and research as an affiliate of Beijing Normal University in Zhuhai and City University of Macao (2017–2021). Currently an associate professor at Liming University in Quanzhou, he continues to inspire and educate students while advancing his scholarly pursuits.

© Yan Wang

Wang, Yan • *Section I. Chapter 1*

Yan Wang is an associate professor of urban planning at the School of Architecture, Southeast University (Nanjing, China). Her research expertise is in the history and theory of urban planning and cultural heritage conservation. She oversees the Secretariat of the Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM). Her research mainly focuses on planning design, and she teaches courses on the history of urban and rural planning, the cognition of urban and rural historical environment, the graduation design project, and a public design course for postgraduate students.

© Sarah Ward

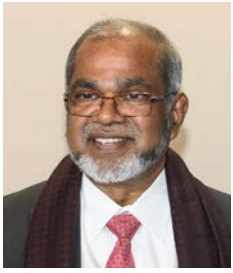
Ward, Sarah • *Introduction*

Sarah Ward is a maritime archaeology and underwater cultural heritage (UCH) professor at Dalian Maritime University, one of China's 'Double First Class' universities. Recognized by UNESCO as one of Asia Pacific's most distinguished and experienced experts in the field, she is a consultant to China's National Centre for Archaeology, and co-program director of the Cambodia UCH Cooperation Program. She is a recipient of an MIT Ocean Discovery Fellowship and part of the team that won a National Trust Heritage Award and a UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Award for managing the M24 Japanese Midget Submarine wreck site, identified by UNESCO as "setting a new global benchmark for protecting and interpreting a UCH site". She has been based in China since 2018.

© Peter Webb

Webb, Peter • *Section II. Chapter 7*

Peter Webb studied Arabic at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, University of London) and at the University of Damascus. He then qualified as a solicitor, working in the insolvency and restructuring law practice at Clifford Chance LLP in London before returning to academia and a Ph.D. at SOAS in languages and cultures of the Near and Middle East. Following his Ph.D., he was awarded an Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellowship 2014/15 by the Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin, and he was a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in 2015, hosted at SOAS. He joined Leiden University, in the Netherlands, in 2017.



© Gamini Wijesuriya

Wijesuriya, Gamini • *Section II. Chapter 5*

Born in Sri Lanka, Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya is an architect/archaeologist and a renowned heritage conservation and management professional with over 45 years of experience. He obtained his Ph.D. from Leiden University in the Netherlands, an M.A. from the University of York, United Kingdom, an M.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, USA, and an M.Sc. and a B.Sc. from Sri Lanka on a variety of heritage-related subjects. He is credited with many publications and is known internationally for his work on World Heritage and his pioneering work on living heritage. Head of Conservation for the government of Sri Lanka at the age of 28, a position he held for 18 years (1982–2000), he then served the New Zealand Department of Conservation as a principal regional scientist (2001–2004). Dr. Wijesuriya was the first Asian professional to become a staff member of ICCROM in Rome, Italy. In 2021, he received the ICCROM award in recognition of his significant contribution to ICCROM and to the field of cultural heritage in Sri Lanka.

© Congcong Yao

Yao, Congcong • *Section I. Chapter 1*

Congcong Yao is currently a Ph.D. student of urban and rural planning at the School of Architecture, Southeast University, Nanjing (China). His fields of expertise are in urban planning, history and heritage conservation, and cultural heritage conservation and reuse. He has an M.A. in the built environment and sustainable heritage from the Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources, University College London. Currently, he is in charge of the Secretariat of the Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM). His main research topics centre around the maritime Silk Roads and the conservation of coastal historical cities, the conservation and planning of historical relics along the Silk Roads, and the conservation and regeneration of the urban-rural historic environment.

ARCHITECTURE MONUMENTS AND URBANISM

*This trilogy on **Architecture, Monuments and Urbanism** is published within UNESCO's 'Thematic Collection of the Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Roads', a multi-volume series which cultivates a better understanding of the rich history of the Silk Roads and their contemporary legacy and relevance. By harnessing the wealth of expertise UNESCO has developed on this subject, the Thematic Collection identifies and promotes the concrete fields and elements that have facilitated and been generated from the cultural interactions and exchanges along these historic routes. Furthering the aims of the UNESCO Silk Roads Programme, the Thematic Collection promotes intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding to achieve sustainable peace and development in the current globalized world.*

With each part dedicated to a unique theme – Architectural Influences, Cities along the Silk Roads, and Maritime Networks and Port Cities – this trilogy explores the multi-layered interactions between people and cultures along the Silk Roads. It highlights human creativity, conflicts, and natural disasters that shaped their distinctive architecture and urbanism from Eastern Asia to the Iberian Peninsula.

Part I provides an overview of urban and cultural landscapes, focusing on building typologies and their architectural evolution through knowledge exchanges in technologies and materials. Part II examines the cities along the overland Silk Roads as hubs of co-existence, discussing each at its peak within key historical periods. Part III delves into ports along the maritime Silk Routes, illustrating human resilience in advancing maritime networks and urban developments that connected continents, seas, and oceans over centuries.

Thematic Collection of the Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Roads

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